

# World War II German Battle Insignia



Gordon Williamson • Illustrated by Darko Pavlovic



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Series editor Martin Windrow

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## Editor's Note

Throughout this text the terms e.g. 'gold', 'silver', are used in the sense of 'metals having the appearance of...', except in those cases where actual gold or silver are specifically mentioned. We have capitalised these terms where they represent awards presented in graded classes, e.g. the Close Combat Clasp in Silver was awarded for a larger number of days of close combat than the clasp in Bronze. We have not capitalised them where the difference was simply between categories of troops who qualified for the various patterns, e.g. the Infantry Assault Badges in silver or bronze for non-motorised and motorised infantry respectively.

## Artist's Note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

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The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.



# WORLD WAR II GERMAN BATTLE INSIGNIA

## INTRODUCTION



SS-Untersturmführer Erich Zeppe, a Knight's Cross holder who served with SS-Panzer Grenadier-Regiment 10 'Westland' of 5.SS-Panzer-Division 'Wiking'. Note the correct positioning of the Close Combat Clasp, above any medal ribbon bar which was worn. Other visible awards here are the Iron Cross 1st Class, Infantry Assault Badge in the bronze version for men of Panzer Grenadier units, and the top of a Wound Badge. The bar appears to include ribbons for the Iron Cross 2nd Class/ Eastern Winter Campaign 1941/42 Medal/ ? /West Wall Medal / Czechoslovakia Occupation Medal.

IT MAY BE USEFUL to explain at the outset the terminology used in this book, and the decisions taken over which subjects to include and which to exclude.

The term 'battle insignia' is taken from the German *Kampfabzeichen*. In the context of this book it is intended to indicate that the badge was awarded either for participation in a specific battle, as with campaign awards or those for specific actions; or was awarded for participation in a particular *type* of battle, i.e. infantry combat, armoured combat, etc.

For this reason many badges which are, in collectors' terms, extremely desirable – such as the Pilot's Badge, Paratrooper's Badge, etc – are not included here, because they are qualification badges and did not, in themselves, require the recipient to have taken part in any actual combat. As far as this work is concerned, the humble Infantry Combat Badge is a far more significant award than the desirable Pilot's Badge, simply because it could only be earned in battle.

After some consideration it was decided that the 'war badges' of the Navy – termed *Kriegsabzeichen*, rather than *Kampfabzeichen* or *Sturmabzeichen* – also fall outside the scope of this work. Though these awards did require the recipient to have participated in operational war cruises, qualification for them did not demand the element of personal combat experience which governed the bestowal of those badges awarded for ground warfare.

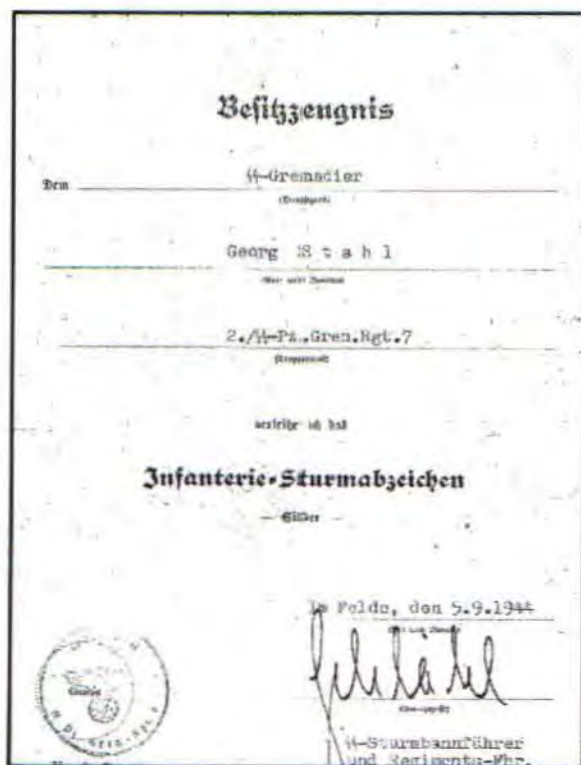
\* \* \*

To avoid repetition throughout the text, some salient points which are common to all of the awards contained in this work will be covered here.

Unless otherwise mentioned in the text, all these types of insignia were supplied by the manufacturers in a simple paper envelope, usually printed with the title of the award. Sometimes these packets also feature the logo 'LDO'. This is the mark of the *Leistungsgemeinschaft Deutscher Ordenshersteller* or Association of German Orders Manufacturers, a form of 'trade guild' which regulated standards and exercised quality control. The insignia were usually wrapped in protective tissue paper within the envelope. In some cases the envelope would be made of clear glassine paper; in others, the award would be contained in a small cardboard carton, once again wrapped in protective tissue. These protective containers were more often than not simply thrown away at the time of the award, when the officer bestowing the piece pinned it to the recipient's tunic.

When bestowed the insignia would usually be accompanied by a small award document. Most of the standard official types were in DIN A5 size, printed in a fairly simple format with the title of the award and with spaces





ABOVE The award documents presented to recipients with their insignia varied greatly in the degree of elaboration. This is a very simple example: the *Besitzzeugnis* or 'possession certificate' for the Infantry Assault Badge in silver, to SS-Grenadier Georg Stahl of 2nd Co, SS-Pz Gren-Regt 7 (from 4.SS-Polizei-Pz Gren-Div, then serving in the Balkans), dated 5 September 1944 and signed by the major commanding that regiment.

ABOVE RIGHT A typical example of *Soldbuch* (paybook) entries for awards. The top entry, dated 15 July 1943, is for the Wound Badge in Black. On 20 October, note the award of the Iron Cross 2nd Class ('EK II Kl'). On 15 December 1944 the Wound Badge in Silver marked a third wound. It is puzzling that the award of the bronze Infantry Assault Badge is dated as late as 26 January 1945. All entries appear to be signed by the same SS-Untersturmfuhrer and company commander ('SS Ustuf.u.Kp.fhr.').



for the recipient's details to be entered at unit level with a typewriter (or sometimes by hand, if a skilled calligrapher was available). Once completed, the document was signed by the authorising officer and the ink stamp of the issuing authority was applied in the lower left corner. In some cases larger and more elaborate award documents were made up locally, sometimes by individual units and pre-printed with unit details. The study of award documents is a major undertaking in its own right; for instance, those for the Infantry Assault Badge and the Crimea Shield, in particular, seem to have had a huge range of variants. For the purposes of this work only a few representative examples will be shown.

When these awards were issued, an entry was made in the soldier's personal records, including his *Soldbuch* (paybook) and *Wehrpass* (military pass). Occasionally, soldiers would fold the award document up and keep it in the small pocket at the back of the *Soldbuch*. Using such evidence of entitlement to the award, soldiers would be able to purchase additional examples of the insignia at their own expense through retail outlets controlled by the above-mentioned LDO. Small stick-pin miniature versions of most of these awards were available for wear on the lapel of civilian clothing. The full-size versions of most (with the obvious exceptions of the campaign shields, cuffbands, etc) were worn on the left breast of the uniform tunic just below the Iron Cross if one was worn, such combat awards ranking lower than gallantry or other orders.

In the case of metal badges, early pieces tended to be manufactured from high-quality metals such as *Tombakbrunze*, a bronze alloy, with an appropriate coloured plating. As the war drew on economy measures saw the use of zinc as a replacement for expensive Tombak, and the quality of the finish declined to the point where many were simple lacquers which



An unidentified SS-Oberscharführer of anti-tank troops within a mountain unit; note the 'P' for Panzerjäger on his shoulder straps, and the Edelweiss badge on the side of his interesting mountain cap, which has an unusual buckled flap. He wears the Infantry Assault Badge in bright silver finish high on his left pocket, above a sports badge and other insignia which are hidden here. The bar appears to bear ribbons for the Eastern Winter Campaign 1941/42 Medal, a Wehrmacht Long Service Medal, and the West Wall and Czechoslovakian Occupation medals.



quickly wore off, leaving a plain dull grey finish. Other late manufacture insignia had an anodised finish which was chemically absorbed by the base metal, again leaving a dull grey finish.

Most early pieces were die struck, either in thin hollow strikings (i.e. hollow-backed or 'dished'), or sometimes in solid metal. Later zinc pieces were sometimes die struck, but were often die cast to allow the pin hinge fittings to be manufactured integrally with the body of the badge, thus saving on assembly costs.

## ARMY INSIGNIA

### The Infantry Assault Badge (*Infanterie Sturmabzeichen*)

This award was instituted on 20 December 1939 by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Generaloberst von Brauchitsch.

The qualification criteria for the badge were:

- (i) That the recipient had to be a member of an Infantry Regiment, Grenadier Regiment, Fusilier Regiment, Rifle Regiment, or Mountain Rifle Regiment; and
- (ii) That he had participated in infantry assault actions, in the front line, armed only with infantry small arms,
- (iii) On at least three different days.

The term 'assaults' included infantry attacks, counter-attacks, armed reconnaissance patrols, and hand-to-hand combat actions. Award of the Infantry Assault Badge was usually authorised at regimental commander level or above. The first awards were made on 28 May 1940, when Gen. von Brauchitsch presented the badge to two soldiers; one officer and one enlisted man were chosen for this symbolic ceremony.

A number of designs were suggested, and that proposed by the firm of C.E. Juncker of Berlin was chosen for large-scale production. It shows a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves, at the top of which is a Wehrmacht-style emblem showing the national eagle with wings folded, clasp ing a swastika. Lying diagonally across the centre of the wreath from upper left to lower right is a fairly accurate rendition of the Mauser Kar98k rifle with fixed bayonet – the standard weapon of the German infantryman. The badge typically measures 6.3cm in height x 4.9cm in width, is finished in a silver colour, and has a vertical pin-back attachment on the reverse face to allow it to be worn on the left breast of the uniform tunic. The badge was produced in huge numbers during the war and by a wide range of firms. There were no significant variations in design, but the materials used and the style of pin fitting might vary between manufacturers. On 1 June 1940 a further version of the badge was instituted, this



time with a bronzed finish. This version was for award to motorised or armoured infantry.

Both the silver and bronze versions of the Infantry Assault Badge were re-authorised in 'de-Nazified' form under the terms of the *Ordens-Gesetz* of 1957. In this case both the eagle and swastika are removed, leaving only the wreath with its rifle and bayonet.

### **The Close Combat Clasp** **(*Nahkampfspange*)**

The Close Combat Clasp was instituted by Adolf Hitler on 25 November 1942, to reward those who had taken part in fierce hand-to-hand combat. Though most of those who would qualify would be infantry soldiers, it was by no means restricted to them. Any soldier from whatever branch of the armed services who fulfilled the qualifying criteria was eligible for the award. The insignia was instituted in three grades: Bronze (*I Stufe*) for 15 days of close combat fighting; Silver (*II Stufe*) for 30 days; and Gold (*III Stufe*) for 50 days. The total of days could be accumulated over a period of time, and were usually logged in the soldier's records until such time as he had amassed enough for the appropriate grade.

At the time of the award's institution a 'credit' system was introduced to allow for those who had already accumulated a great deal of time on active service, as follows:

8 months of active service	= 5 combat days credit
12 months	= 10 combat days credit
18 months	= 15 combat days credit.

Thus some soldiers who had been on active service since 1940 would have qualified immediately for the Bronze grade as soon as it was instituted. Authorisation for the award usually came from regimental commander level or above.

It cannot be over-emphasised just how importantly this badge was regarded. Hitler himself considered it the highest infantry award, and reserved the right to bestow the Gold grade personally. The award of the Bronze clasp would often bring with it the automatic award of the Iron Cross 2nd Class if this was not already possessed by the recipient. Likewise, the award of the Silver grade would normally be accompanied by the Iron Cross 1st Class where appropriate. The Gold grade usually (though not always) brought with it the award of the German Cross in Gold if this was not already held; and only around 600 awards of the Gold grade were made.



ABOVE The Infantry Assault Badge – the basic badge in silver finish (above), and the dull bronze version introduced on 1 June 1940 for motorised infantry (opposite far right). The slight differences in detail between the two striking are simply the result of manufacturers' variations; a large number of firms were contracted to produce these badges.

ABOVE LEFT An unidentified SS-Unterscharführer wearing the Infantry Assault Badge in silver and the black basic grade of the Wound Badge. Interestingly, he has chosen to display the full size ribbon of the War Merit Cross – not a prestigious combat award – in his buttonhole, and has relegated his Iron Cross 2nd Class and Eastern Winter Campaign Medal to the small ribbon bar above his pocket.

The Close Combat Clasp. The example shown is an early striking of the Silver grade (*II Stufe*), for 30 days in close quarter battle; later examples, made from zinc, quickly lost their finish. Note the metal backing plate behind the voided central motif.







**ABOVE** Franz Weber, though only a 23-year-old lance-corporal, was decorated with the very prestigious Knight's Cross on 28 October 1944. He was already a veteran of much bitter hand-to-hand combat, as shown by his Close Combat Clasp, Iron Crosses, Infantry Assault Badge and Wound Badge.

**BELOW** Oberst Heinz Georg Lemm, holder of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves (and the Demjansk Shield), wears the Close Combat Clasp in Silver. Even such relatively high-ranking officers as this colonel might involve themselves in the thick of the fighting and earn this highly respected award.



crimped into position. This serves to highlight the area of the central motif – which is in most cases voided (though some later war pieces have the central portion left solid) – when viewed from the front. The reverse face normally carries the name of the manufacturer. Early examples of the clasp were made in fine plated Tombak, though the bulk of production was in poorer quality zinc which quickly lost its finish.

A special version in fire-gilded Tombak was produced in which the centre plate is held on by a small single rivet with, above this on the edge of the central motif, a small retaining hook. These versions are never maker-marked but are thought to have been manufactured by the Berlin firm of C.E. Juncker. It is said that this special 'de luxe' version was for award personally by Adolf Hitler, or by Heinrich Himmler on his behalf, at two special award ceremonies at Ulm in 1945; and that a second, 'standard' piece was also issued to recipients on these occasions. Correspondence with recipients suggests that this was not the case, however, as at least one recipient on one of these occasions received only a single award, and that was of the standard form.

Although the Bronze and Silver awards were normally supplied in a small paper packet or card box as previously described, the Gold version was awarded in a special presentation case with black velvet lining to the base and white satin lining to the lid.

The 1957 'de-Nazified' version of the insignia lost only the small eagle and swastika emblem from the central motif.

### **The General Assault Badge (Allgemeines Sturmabzeichen)**

The General Assault Badge was instituted on 1 June 1940, and was intended to reward those soldiers serving in units which did not qualify for the Infantry Assault or Tank Battle Badges. It is sometimes referred to in Soldbuch entries as the *Pionier Sturmabzeichen*, although it was not intended specifically for combat engineers – indeed, original wartime references specifically mention assault artillery as one of the intended recipient branches. The criteria for award were broadly similar to those for the Infantry Assault Badge, including participation in at least three

The badge consists of a long horizontal clasp measuring, typically, 9.7cm x 2.6cm. In the centre is a small square motif featuring a border of oak leaves topped by a spread-winged eagle and swastika. Below this is a bayonet crossed with a stick grenade. From either side of this central motif sprays of oak leaves emerge, interspersed with a 'sunburst' ray effect. The reverse features a long horizontal pin, and in the centre a small black-finished backing plate is





The General Assault Badge, shown here in its basic form (left); and in its 'enhanced' forms with the small plaque at its base showing the number of engagements in which the recipient had taken part – 50 (centre) and 75 engagements (right). Note the modified shape of the latter at the base of the wreath.

A Revieroberwachmeister of Ordnungspolizei wears the General Assault Badge next to the Wound Badge in Black. In his tunic buttonhole he wears the ribbons for the Iron Cross 2nd Class and Eastern Winter Campaign medal.

Although most Police units at the front served principally in the security role, many found themselves involved in combat against Red Army troops and earned combat decorations – the Choltz Pocket fighting of winter 1941/42 was notable in this respect. (Josef Charita)



actions on separate days.

The badge, designed by Wilhelm Ernst Peekhaus of Berlin, consists of an oval wreath of oak leaves, in the centre of which is a large Wehrmacht-style eagle with folded wings grasping a swastika in its talons, all superimposed over a crossed stick grenade and

bayonet. The badge is in silver finish, and features a vertical hinged pin fitting on the reverse.

On 22 June 1943 a further series of General Assault Badges was introduced in order to reflect the greater number of combat days accumulated by that stage of the war. As with the introduction of the Close Combat Clasp, the award was made retrospectively, with credits given for time already served, as follows:

8 months of active service =	10 actions credit
12 months	= 15 actions credit
15 months	= 25 actions credit.

Thus, once again, some soldiers would qualify for the first grade of the new insignia – the '25' (*II Stufe*) badge – as soon as it was introduced.

Two distinct patterns were introduced. The first resembles the basic badge in its overall design but is of two-part construction, with a slightly enlarged and raised eagle, bayonet and grenade attached to the wreath by rivets. In this version the central motif has a chemically blackened finish, the wreath being in the usual matt silver colour. At the base of the wreath is a small square plaque – the so-called *Einsatzzahl* – bearing the number '25' or '50' indicating the number of actions in which the recipient had participated.

The next grade is distinctly different in appearance. The central eagle motif is much larger and more imposing, and the wreath to which it is riveted is also larger and less oval in shape. In this case the eagle is also chemically blackened, but the wreath is anodised in a matt gold colour. The small square plaque at the base carries the number '75' or '100'.

It is believed that only two, or perhaps three, firms were involved in the manufacture of these higher classes of the General Assault Badge, which are extremely rare and highly sought-after – a factor which has led to their being widely, and in some cases expertly, faked.

Although quite large and cumbersome-looking, these badges were made from lightweight zinc and in some cases were also semi-hollow backed to keep the weight down and make their wearing less inconvenient.

At the time of the introduction of these new grades, the award was also made available to qualifying members of the assault artillery and crews of self-propelled artillery and SP anti-tank guns. Authorisation for the award was usually made at division, corps, army or army group command level.

All of these General Assault Badges were re-authorised under the Ordens-Gesetz of 1957 in the de-Nazified format, which in this case meant that only the swastika was removed. In the 1957 versions the 25/50 and 75/100 action badges are also of multi-part construction.



**RIGHT** Knight's Cross winner Hauptmann Rolf Due wears the 25- or 50-engagement pattern of the General Assault Badge, partly identifiable by the contrast between the silver wreath and the chemically blackened central motif. These 'enhanced' grades of combat badge are only rarely seen in wartime photographs.

**FAR RIGHT** An SS-Obersturmführer of SS-Artillerie-Regiment 5 from the 'Wiking' Division poses in full dress uniform. As a member of the artillery proper, rather than a Flak unit, he wears the General Assault Badge rather than the Army's Anti-Aircraft Badge.



### **The Tank Battle Badge (Panzerkampfabzeichen)**

The Tank Battle Badge was introduced on 20 December 1939 by Generaloberst von Brauchitsch. The award was to be granted to any tank crew member who had taken part in at least three separate armoured assault actions on different days.

Designed by Wilhelm Ernst Peekhaus, it consists of a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves with a Wehrmacht-style folded-wing eagle and swastika at the top. In the centre is shown a three-quarter-front image of a tank facing left to right, with the right track breaking the wreath; although stylised, this appears to be a reasonable rendition of a short-barrelled Panzerkampfwagen IV. The badge is silver in colour, and has a vertical hinged pin fitting on the reverse.

On 1 June 1940 a new version with a bronze finish was introduced, for award to members of armoured reconnaissance units, of the rifle battalions of Panzer divisions, and to crews of armoured cars and other armoured vehicles other than tanks. Award of the Tank Battle Badges was usually authorised at regimental or divisional command level.

The Tank Battle Badge in silver (left), awarded after three separate engagements with the enemy on different dates. The darker bronze grade (right) was awarded from 1 June 1940 to non-tank crew personnel of armoured units fulfilling the same criteria.



In June 1943 the need to reflect the increasing length of veteran crews' battle record was recognised by the introduction of a new series of Tank Battle Badges in both silver and bronze versions:

(i) Silver '25/50'. The first of the new styles is similar in design to the standard badge but is of two-piece construction, with the slightly altered central motif riveted to the wreath. In this version the tank and the terrain which it sits on are chemically blackened, while the wreath is in matt silver finish. At the base of the wreath is a small plaque bearing the numerals '25' or '50' to indicate the number of armoured actions in which the recipient had participated.



(ii) Bronze '25/50'. In this version both the tank and the wreath remain in a dull bronze finish.

The second, higher grade of the new styles is larger and features a slightly redesigned tank motif which more closely resembles a medium-barrelled PzKpfw III. The wreath is also larger and no longer truly oval, the lower part having extra oak leaf sprays spreading horizontally from the sides of the numeral plaque; this bears the numbers '75' or '100'.



ABOVE LEFT A 25-engagement version of the Tank Battle Badge in bronze – the entire badge is finished in bronze colour. Note the central motif, altered in details from the basic award: the stylised tank now has a longer, slimmer gun barrel and larger road wheels, and there are logs scattered on the ground beneath its tracks.

ABOVE RIGHT Knight's Cross holder SS-Obersturmführer Hinrich Karck, of SS-PzGren-Regt 2 from 2.SS-Pz-Div 'Das Reich', was killed in the Normandy campaign. Just below and left of his Iron Cross 1st Class is the Tank Battle Badge in bronze.



CENTRE 'Second generation' numbered Tank Battle Badges in silver. On the left is the pattern for 100 (or 75) engagements, with a gilt wreath; on the right, the pattern for 50 (or 25), with a silver wreath. The tank motif itself is in gunmetal colour in each case. Note further detail changes between the '25/50' and '75/100' patterns, both to the wreath and to the tank motif. (Jamie Cross)

(i) Silver '75/100'. In this version the tank is in a silver finish while the wreath is anodised gold.

(ii) Bronze '75/100'. The tank and terrain remain bronze while the wreath is gold.

Both styles were struck in lightweight zinc alloys so that, like the numbered grades of the General Assault Badges, their larger size did not pull inconveniently on the tunic. Only two or three companies were involved in the manufacture of the numbered grades of badge, which were produced in both solid and semi-hollow backed form.

The 1957 de-Nazified version lost both the eagle and swastika from the top of the wreath, but is otherwise unchanged.

### **The Army Anti-Aircraft Battle Badge (Heeres Flak Kampfabzeichen)**

This award was instituted on 18 July 1941 by Generalfeldmarschall von Brauchitsch, to reward members of Army anti-aircraft artillery units. The



The Army's Anti-Aircraft Battle Badge. Early examples were in a silver-plated finish, while later-manufactured pieces were often dull grey or even chemically darkened.

FAR RIGHT Hauptmann Hans Lex, of Panzer-Regiment 'Gross-deutschland', wears the Tank Battle Badge in silver next to the Iron Cross 1st Class on his field-grey service tunic. He also displays the Knight's Cross and the German Cross in Gold.



badge was awarded on a points system, with 16 points being required to qualify. Four points were given for an unshared aircraft 'kill', while two were given for a victory shared with another crew. In April 1942 this points system was abandoned. Thereafter the badge could be awarded to an entire gun crew if they had each taken part in at least five engagements against the enemy even if in none of these had an enemy aircraft actually been shot down.

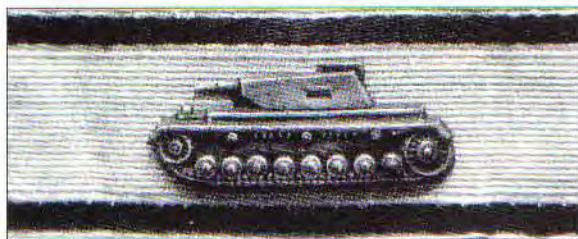
Searchlight and sound detector crews were also eligible, originally on a points system, with one point going to the first crew to detect the enemy aircraft. Again, however, in 1942 this was changed to participation in five successful actions or active duty during at least 15 air raids. The unit commander would also qualify when at least half of the gun crews under his command had earned the badge. Effectively, the badge was awarded to the gun crews for combat actions, and to the unit commander for his leadership of the gun crews. It was also awarded to Waffen-SS Flak units. However, it was not awarded for ground actions, although 8.8cm Flak guns were often used against tanks.

Designed once again by the prolific Wilhelm Ernst Peekhaus, the badge consists of a vertical

Oberleutnant Gerhard Lange of Pz-Regt 35, from 4.Pz-Div, wears the Tank Battle Badge for 25 engagements. Although the numbered 'box' is only partly visible, the larger size and contrasting colour of the tank motif indicate that it is of the '25/50' pattern. Lange also displays the Knight's Cross, Iron Cross 1st Class and Wound Badge in Silver; in his buttonhole is the ribbon and insignia of the Army Honour Roll Clasp.



To translate its German title literally, this is the 'Special Badge for Defeat of a Tank etc. by a Single Fighter'. The dark metal tank silhouette – oddly, shaped like an early German PzKw IV rather than an enemy type – is pinned onto an aluminium brocade backing strip with black edges, which was then sewn to the right upper sleeve.



A reminder that tank personnel often had to fight dismounted: wearing field-grey service dress, Oberleutnant Peter Prien of Pz-Regt 3 from 2.Pz-Div displays two awards of the 'Single-Handed Tank Destruction' badge. Although difficult to discern in this photo, under magnification the original print shows that he also wears the 25-engagement Tank Battle Badge, as well as the Wound Badge in Silver, the Close Combat Clasp in Bronze, and the Crimea Shield.

oval wreath of oak leaves surmounted by a folded-wing Wehrmacht-style eagle. In the centre is an 8.8cm anti-aircraft gun pointing upwards to the top right. The badge is generally in a dull grey finish although some early strikings in Tombak were given a silver-plated finish. The 1957 de-Nazified version lost the eagle and swastika from the top of the wreath.

### **Special Badge for Single-Handed Destruction of a Tank (Sonderabzeichen für das Niederkämpfen von Panzerkampfwagen usw. durch Einzelkämpfer)**

This badge, usually referred to as the *Panzervernichtungsabzeichen*, was introduced on 9 March 1942, but made retrospective to 22 June 1941 – the first day of the invasion of the USSR – to reward those soldiers who had single-handedly knocked out an enemy tank. To qualify, this had to

be accomplished using only hand-held weapons such as mines, 'sticky bombs', satchel charges, hand grenades or – later – the shoulder-fired Panzerschreck and Panzerfaust weapons. Crews of anti-tank guns were not eligible.

The badge consists of a 3.2cm-wide strip of aluminium woven brocade, 9cm in length, with black edge stripes. In the centre a small dark metal left profile view of a tank, some 4.3cm long x 1.8cm in height, is fixed by prongs. (It is

interesting that the designers based this on an impression of the distinctive shape of a German PzKpfw IV rather than that of an enemy tank.) The badge was stitched to the upper right sleeve of the uniform tunic, one being awarded for each tank destroyed.

Should a fifth tank be destroyed, the soldier would surrender his first four silver badges and receive a single replacement with the backing strip woven in gold-coloured brocade to represent all five victories. Any combination of gold and silver awards could then be worn to represent any number of 'kills'. The greatest number of these awards was made to Oberstleutnant Günther Vieczenz, who personally knocked out 21 enemy tanks; this lieutenant-colonel thus earned the right to wear four gold and one silver grade badges.

As the original wartime design did not incorporate a swastika there was no need for a redesign for postwar wear; the official 1957 version remains identical to the wartime pattern.

A similar badge was intended for award to those who single-handedly shot down an enemy aircraft using only small arms; this differed only in the replacement of the tank motif with a small metal aeroplane in diagonal plan view. It is not thought that any examples of this badge were ever manufactured, though the market abounds with post-war fakes.

### **The Anti-Partisan Battle Badge (Bandenkampfabzeichen)**

This badge was instituted by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler on 30 January 1944, to reward those who had served in action against enemy partisans (Hitler insisted that they be referred to as 'bandits').

Three grades were manufactured, in Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Bronze was awarded for 20 days' action against partisans, the Silver for 50 days, and the Gold for 100 days. The badge could be bestowed on any





ABOVE LEFT **The Anti-Partisan Battle Badge in Bronze** – an unusual example in that it has retained 100 per cent of its original finish. This badge could be, and was, awarded to perfectly honourable troops of any branch of the armed forces who took part in actions against partisans for the requisite number of days. However, many of its recipients were members of security units who undeniably earned a brutal reputation for atrocities under the overall command of SS Lt.Gen. Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Himmler's chief of anti-partisan warfare – whose escape from punishment by testifying for the prosecution at Nuremberg was a highly questionable episode.



ABOVE RIGHT **The Sniper Badge.** The example illustrated is the Gold grade for 60 kills, with a gold wire cord edging. No photographs have yet emerged showing any grade of this badge being worn; snipers showed an understandable reluctance to identify their deadly trade in case they were taken prisoner – most were given short shrift by their captors.

which is plunged a wide-bladed sword with a Germanic 'sunwheel' swastika on its hilt. The reverse of the badge featured a vertical hinged pin. The vast majority of original examples of this award were made from zinc, and consequently it is now unusual to find one with its full original finish still intact.

The badge was originally manufactured by the firm of C.E.Juncker of Berlin. The examples made by this company were of solid die struck construction. The Berlin factory was bombed out in 1944, however, and manufacture was transferred to a production co-operative in Gablonz. This produced the badge in a semi-hollow pressure die cast form. This second type is that most commonly encountered.

The first Gold grades were not awarded until February 1945, and the first few, personally awarded by Himmler, were specially finished with a contrasting gunmetal-blue coloured sword blade. A special version with a diamond-studded sunwheel on the sword was reputed to have been ordered by Himmler from C.E.Juncker, but there is no firm evidence to suggest that it was ever actually manufactured.

The de-Nazified 1957 version of this award lost the sunwheel swastika from the hilt of the sword, and also the small skull and crossbones from the base of the wreath, but otherwise remained unaltered.

### **The Sniper Badge (Scharfschützenabzeichen)**

This badge was introduced on 20 August 1944 to reward snipers for their sharp-shooting skills. Snipers were rarely taken alive, and those who were unfortunate enough to fall into enemy hands usually suffered mistreatment or death. For this reason few snipers would have considered wearing a badge which would identify them at a glance. No photographs have yet surfaced showing this insignia being worn, though undoubted original examples do exist, and it was almost certainly formally awarded. No doubt the recipients simply kept the award in a safe place rather than risk actually wearing it.

The badge is embroidered on an oval wool base patch. It consists of an eagle's head in black embroidery with white thread detailing and yellow beak, over green oak leaves with a single brown acorn. This is contained within a green oval border for the standard grade badge, which was

troops of the armed forces (including Navy and Air Force) or Police who took part in anti-partisan operations. In the case of the Luftwaffe the three grades were awarded for 30, 75 or 150 operational sorties respectively.

The badge consists of the usual vertical oval oak leaf wreath with at its base a skull and crossbones. In the centre is represented a writhing multi-headed serpent (the partisans), into



awarded for scoring 20 kills. A higher grade, with a silver twist cord around the outside of the green border, was awarded for 40 kills. The highest grade, with gold twist cord outside the green border, was awarded for 60 kills.

This extremely rare badge is seldom encountered as an original, but has been very widely reproduced.

## CUFFBANDS

The cuffband as a military decoration was not an invention of the Third Reich. As early as 1784 Hanoverian units in service with the British crown first won the right to wear a cuffband with the legend 'GIBRALTAR' in recognition of the part played by the Hanoverian 3rd, 5th and 6th Infantry Regiments in the defence of that fortress against a Franco-Spanish assault. In World War I this commemorative band, in bright blue with gold or yellow lettering, was worn on the right sleeve by their successor units: Fusilier-Regiment General-Feldmarschall Prinz Albrecht von Preussen (Hannoversches) Nr.73; Infanterie-Regiment Von Voigts-Rhetz (3.Hannoversches) Nr.79; and Jäger-Bataillon Nr.10 (Hannoversches).

### The Crete Cuffband (Ärmelband 'Kreta')

The first campaign cuffband to be instituted in World War II was to commemorate participation in the battle for Crete in spring 1941. The Kriegsmarine order instituting the band was dated 14 August 1942; that for the Luftwaffe followed on 29 September 1942, and finally that for the Army on 16 October 1942.

The award consists of a white cotton band 3.2cm wide with 3mm-wide borders of golden-yellow Russia braid. Machine-embroidered in similar golden-yellow yarn along the centre is the legend 'KRETA' in block letters, flanked on each side by a spray of acanthus leaves. The band was to be worn on the lower left sleeve of the uniform tunic. The award was open for the nomination of eligible personnel until 31 October 1944, after which date no further awards were made.

The following criteria were applied to prospective recipients:

- (i) To have participated between 20 and 27 May 1941 in a glider-borne or parachute landing on the island of Crete. (Qualifying units were principally from 7.Flieger-Division, including paratroopers of Fallschirmjäger-Regiments 1, 2 and 3, plus the Luftlande-Sturm-Regiment; and subsequently units from 5. and 6.Gebirgs-Division flown into the captured airfields, II/Panzer-Regiment 31, Kradschützen-Bataillon 55, and Maschinengewehr-Bataillon 609.)
- (ii) To have participated in the supporting air operations over Crete. (This applied to transport aircraft bringing in reinforcements or dropping

The four campaign cuffbands of the German armed forces which are confirmed as having been manufactured and issued, shown in their standard regulation format. In cloth insignia as in so many other items, some manufacturers' variants did exist, but the majority will be found in the styles illustrated here.





supplies, fighter escorts, etc, as well as the crews of the original airlift.)  
(iii) To have been on active service at sea in the waters around Crete in the period up to 27 May 1941. (This included those Army troops from GJR 85 and 100 which came under attack on 19 May while being transported by sea to reinforce the German forces on the island.)

Two distinct patterns of award document were produced for the Kreta cuffband. The Army/Navy version was quite plain; the Luftwaffe version was far more elaborate, and bore a map of the island with the Luftwaffe's Fallschirmjäger insignia superimposed.

### The Africa Cuffband

The first cuffband relating to the campaign in North Africa was the 'AFRIKAKORPS' band introduced on 28 July 1941. This was not a combat award, however, but rather a simple indication that the soldier had served in theatre with this force for at least two months; it was thus, strictly, more analogous to a formation sign than a battle badge.

On 29 December 1942 an order was published by the Navy announcing a formal campaign decoration in the form of an 'Afrika' cuffband. An Army order appeared on 15 January 1943, and finally one from the Luftwaffe on 28 January. The final date for awards of the 'Afrika' cuffband was 31 October 1944.

The Army's insignia consists of a 3.2cm-wide band in fine soft mid-brown camelhair material edged with 3mm-wide silver-grey Russia braid. Machine-embroidered along the centre in the same colour is the legend 'AFRIKA' in block letters, flanked on each side by a palm tree head. The band was to be worn on the lower left sleeve. Campaign cuffbands were to be worn in order of institution, so that the 'Kreta' cuffband took precedence and should have been worn uppermost on the sleeve by those individuals who had qualified for both bands. Wartime photos suggest, however, that on occasion the order in which they were worn was reversed.

The criteria for the award of the 'Afrika' cuffband were as follows. The recipient had to have:

- (i) Served a minimum of six months in the theatre of operations; or
- (ii) Been wounded in action in North Africa; or
- (iii) Been killed in action in North Africa, in which case a posthumous award would be made; or
- (iv) Contracted a serious illness or disease while serving in North Africa and after having completed at least three months in the theatre, which required the soldier to be evacuated out of the theatre for hospital treatment; or
- (v) Been awarded a military decoration (such as the Iron Cross, German Cross, etc) for service in North Africa.

After 6 May 1943, the qualifying period of service was reduced from six months to four.

As stated above, in addition to this Army cuffband both the Luftwaffe and Navy introduced their own commemorative bands. In the case of the Luftwaffe it is in mid-blue wool with the legend 'AFRIKA' machine-embroidered in silver-grey yarn for enlisted ranks, and hand-embroidered in aluminium wire thread for officers. The Kriegsmarine version is in dark blue wool with the 'AFRIKA' legend either machine-embroidered in golden-yellow yarn or hand-embroidered in gold wire thread, depending upon rank.



**This Hauptmann of Fallschirmjäger wears both the North Africa and Crete cuffbands – though interestingly, in the reverse of regulation order. The 'KRETA' band, as the earlier award, should have been worn above the later 'AFRIKA' band – and note that the later is the Army rather than the Luftwaffe pattern.**



### The Metz Cuffband

This award was announced on 24 October 1944 by Generalfeldmarschall Keitel, and was intended to recognise the spirited defence of the city and surroundings of Metz by a combination of Waffen-SS units with miscellaneous Wehrmacht personnel, and students and staff from the Army's Officer Training School in the area (Fahnenjunkerschule IV), all fighting as part of Kampfgruppe Siegroth. Partly due to the efforts of these troops, the attacking US 3rd Army – which was also seriously short of fuel and ammunition due to the Allied logistics crisis – was halted on 27 July 1944, and was unable to continue its advance until the defenders were subdued some four months later. Even then, die-hard SS units held out in some locations until early December.

To reward those who took part in the major defensive battles between 27 July and 25 September 1944, Adolf Hitler instituted the cuffband 'Metz 1944'. The band could be awarded to any soldier who had served for at least seven days with Kampfgruppe Siegroth, or who had been wounded during these battles.

The band is cut from good quality black wool badgeloath, with edges in silver-grey Russia braid. Along the centre is machine-embroidered the legend 'Metz 1944' in silver-grey yarn.

This band was long believed never in fact to have been issued; but in recent years a number of wartime photographs of it being worn have surfaced, confirming its manufacture and issue. Like many such insignia it has, of course, been widely faked; the majority of false pieces are erroneously woven in black artificial silk with silver thread edging and hand-embroidered aluminium thread lettering, in an almost exact copy of the style used for SS cuffbands.

Major Anton 'Toni' Müller, a highly decorated infantryman from Gren-Regt 501, wears the 'KURLAND' cuffband in what appears to be a printed or machine-embroidered variant. Note that he also wears the Demjansk Shield.



### The Courland Cuffband

The last campaign cuffband actually to be put into production was instituted on 12 March 1945 by Adolf Hitler, to reward those units which still held out in the Courland Pocket in western Latvia (German, *Kurland*; Latvian, *Kurzeme*), having been cut off by the advancing Red Army. German and Latvian units remained active in the Pocket right up to the final day of German surrender on 8 May 1945. Theoretically, the band was intended for award to those who had taken part in at least three combat actions in the Courland Pocket (making this criterion, at least, similar to those necessary to win most battle or assault badges), or who had been wounded in action. For those in non-front line combat posts a service period of three months in the Pocket was required. It is not known how strictly these intended guidelines were applied, given the chaotic situation in the last few months of the war.

The cuffband consists – by regulation – of a silver-grey band with a decorative black border bearing along the centre the legend 'KURLAND' in black block letters. To the left is a shield bearing the black and white cross emblem of the Grand Master of the Order of Teutonic Knights; and to the right the emblem of the town of Mitau, central to the defence of the peninsula, which comprised a white elk's head on a black shield.

Due to the obvious difficulties of manufacturing and supplying a new piece of insignia at such a late stage in the war, to units effectively cut off behind enemy lines (though communication channels by air and sea were still open), manufacture was handled locally. Consequently, a





**Oberleutnant zur See Gerd-Dietrich Schneider of the Kriegsmarine wears both the Crimea and Kuban shields in the authorised manner. If three shields were awarded to an individual they were to be worn one above two, in order of the date of presentation. (Josef Charita)**

**The silver Narvik Shield is worn here by Oberst Wolf Hagemann of the Mountain Troops. Colonel Hagemann later reached general's rank, and also qualified for the Crimea Shield.**



number of variant forms exist, employing a number of materials including a white cotton ground. The most common form is machine-woven and is said to have been manufactured at a weaving mill at Kuldiga. Others exist in both printed and machine-embroidered forms. The woven type is usually quite short at just 25cm, just enough to cover the facing part of the cuff.

## CAMPAIGN SHIELDS

All of the shield awards that were officially approved, manufactured in volume and issued followed a particular style. All are hollow-backed, die struck from thin sheet metal or zinc, and most have prongs on the reverse. The remainder of the assembly comprises a cloth backing patch of either shield or oval shape in the appropriate Army, Navy or Air Force uniform colour, with four holes through which the prongs are passed; and a similarly shaped metal backing plate slightly larger than the overall dimensions of the shield itself but slightly smaller than the backing cloth, also with holes for the fixing prongs. The whole of the reverse of the assembly had a piece of protective paper or cloth glued over it to prevent the prongs snagging the uniform; and the backing cloth, sandwiched between the shield and backing plate, was sewn to the uniform sleeve.

A variant style exists for many of the shields, lacking the prongs but having instead small tabs on the edges of the shield itself, which once again pass through the backing cloth; in this case they engage with small notches in the edges of the backing plate and are folded over to hold the assembly together.

As the shields were intended to be permanently attached to the left sleeve of the wearer's tunic or greatcoat, it was normal practise for up to five examples to be issued, to allow one to be affixed to each uniform possessed by the recipient. Additional examples could be purchased through licenced retail outlets, or were replaced free if lost during active service. As supplied, they normally came in a simple paper or cellophane envelope. As with other awards, stick-pin miniatures were also available for wear on the lapel of civilian clothing.

Where two shields were authorised, the earlier awarded was worn above the later. If more than two were authorised, the earliest was worn uppermost, the remaining two below this, with the most recently awarded on the right as viewed.

The award documents for the shields were normally signed (usually with a facsimile rather than a genuine signature) by the commander of the garrison, area of operations or 'pocket' for which the award was made. In the normal German form, only the surname was used by senior officers when signing documents. For the Narvik Shield the award document therefore bore the signature 'Dietl'; for the Cholm Shield, 'Scherer'; for the Crimea Shield, 'von Manstein'; for the Kuban Shield, 'von Kleist'; for the Demjansk Shield, 'Brockdorff-Ahlefeldt'; for the Warsaw Shield, 'von dem Bach-Zelewski', and for the Lapland Shield, 'Boehme'.





ABOVE, BELOW & OPPOSITE The Narvik Shield (above) was the only one to be made in two different colours, silver finish for the Army and Air Force and gilt finish for the Navy. The Demjansk Shield (below) and Cholm Shield (opposite) were both produced in white metal finish. Both were awarded for the tenacious defence of German 'pockets' on the northern sector of the Eastern Front during the Soviet winter offensive of 1941/42, although the Demjanskshield for some reason was not instituted until April 1943. (Jamie Cross)



### The Narvik Shield

This was the first of this series of awards, and was instituted for the Army on 19 August 1940 to reward those personnel who had taken part in the battle for Narvik between 9 April and 9 June that year – the pivotal battle of the Norwegian campaign. (The Navy and Air Force published their relevant orders on 12 and 13 September 1940 respectively.)

The award was designed by Professor Dr Richard Klein of Munich and consists of a rather narrow shield coming to a point at the bottom, surmounted by a Wehrmacht-style folded-wing eagle and wreathed in a static swastika above a rectangular plaque bearing the legend 'NARVIK'. The central motif is a crossed anchor and propeller blades symbolising the Navy and Air Force; in the upper centre is the Edelweiss flower emblem of the Mountain Troops, representing the Army's involvement. The Edelweiss is flanked in the top left and right corners of the shield by '19' and '40'.

The badge was stamped from thin sheet metal, with four prongs soldered to the reverse. Early examples were stamped from sheet brass and appropriately plated, while later pieces were made from zinc. Examples intended for award to Army and Air Force personnel were finished in silver (more often in fact simply a dull grey colour), while those for the Navy were gilded.

A total of 8,577 awards of the *Narvikschild* were made, of which 2,700 were to the Army, 2,161 to the Air Force and 3,661 to the Navy; of this total some 680 awards were posthumous.

### The Cholm Shield

The second, and the rarest of the formally authorised and issued campaign shields, was authorised on 1 July 1942 to recognise the tenacious defence of the 'Cholm Pocket' against superior Soviet forces by Kampfgruppe Scherer between 21 January and 5 May 1942. Cholm (Kholm) is a small town on the River Lovat in the Kalinin region of northern Russia; here, during the massive Soviet counter-offensive of winter 1941/42, some 5,500 German troops were cut off. These were predominantly Army personnel, but also included a number of Police troops and even some Navy transport crews. Hitler refused to countenance a break-out and insisted that the 'pocket' be defended. Cholm was declared a 'fortress', and the disparate range of units isolated there were formed into a Kampfgruppe – 'Battle Group' – under the command of Generalmajor Scherer. Supplied by air, the pocket was successfully defended until relief forces broke through to the garrison in early May.

Bestowal of this award ceased on 1 April 1943. The criteria for eligibility were:

- (i) To have served honourably within the Cholm Pocket between the dates specified.
- (ii) To have been wounded in action in its defence.
- (iii) To have flown on transport missions which landed on the Pocket airfield (simply to have flown over and dropped supplies by parachute did not qualify).

The award was designed initially by one of the Police NCOs trapped in the Pocket, Polizei-Rottwachtmeister Schlimm, with Maj.G.





Scherer's encouragement. After the relief of Cholm, Schlimm's suggested design was submitted for approval; it was passed to Professor Dr Richard Klein, who made only minor changes (the original design was slightly taller than the production version).

In its final form the award consists of a simple shield coming to a lower point, measuring 6.5cm x 4cm. Most of the field is occupied by a large Wehrmacht-style folded-wing eagle clutching in its talons an Iron Cross with a mobile swastika in the centre. Below this motif is the legend 'CHOLM' above '1942'.

The first issues of the *Cholmschild* were stamped in thin sheet metal, generally

with three fixing prongs on the reverse, and were attached to the recipient's sleeve by an oval backing cloth and plate as described for the Narvik Shield above. Later examples were struck in zinc and had a shield-shaped cloth backing. Both versions were finished with a silver wash. The simplest way of distinguishing one from another – if the cloth backing is not present – is to test with a magnet; the early sheet metal examples are magnetic, the later zinc pieces are not.

### The Crimea Shield

The next of these awards to be produced was instituted on 25 July 1942, to reward those who had taken part in the fierce and prolonged battles for the Crimean Peninsula between 21 September 1941 and 4 July 1942.

The shield is of stamped sheet metal with a bronze finish; its lower point is rounded. The design shows a map of the Crimea below the adjoining mainland, with the legend 'KRIM' inscribed at a slant across the peninsula. '1941' and '1942' appear on the upper left and right areas of mainland, flanking the wreathed mobile swastika clutched in the talons of a large Wehrmacht-style eagle surmounting the shield. The colour of this award may vary depending on the manufacturer, and can range from a dark chocolate colour to a fine pale bronze. The shield featured the usual metal backing plate and a shield-shaped cloth backing patch.

The criteria for award were that, between the specified dates, the recipient had:

- (i) Served for three months in the Crimean Peninsula or, for Navy personnel, in the waters around the peninsula; or
- (ii) Taken part in at least one major action; or
- (iii) Been wounded whilst serving in the area.

Romanian troops serving alongside the Germans in the region were also eligible for the award. A special version of this award was produced, stamped from pure gold. This is believed to have been bestowed only twice: once to Marshal Antonescu of Romania, who received it personally from Generalfeldmarschall von Manstein, commander of German troops in the Crimea, on 3 July 1942, and again to GFM von Manstein himself on 24 November 1942.

**The Crimea and Kuban campaign shields bore a strong resemblance to one another. Both were of the same basic shape, in bronze, with a large spread-winged eagle at the top, and were stitched to the sleeve by means of a shield-shaped cloth patch. Both were awarded for actions in the same Black Sea coast sector of the Eastern Front. (Photo@Ostfront)**







Rather more decorative than the award document illustrated on page 4, this certificate for the Crimea Shield is made out for Oberstleutnant Frans Kammerer, who served with the staff of II Btl/ Gren-Regt 437. It is dated 16 December 1942 and bears the facsimile signature of Generalfeldmarschall Erich von Manstein, commanding 11th Army.

Over 100,000 awards of the *Krimschild* were made in total. Given that soldiers each received several examples of the award to attach to various uniforms, this is a fairly common piece.

### The Demjansk Shield

This was instituted on 25 April 1943 to reward those who had taken part in the defensive fighting in the Demjansk Pocket with II Armee Korps under General Brockdorf-Ahlefeldt between 8 February and 21 April 1942. Demjansk is a small town south-west of Lake Ilmen in northern Russia. As at Cholm, some 100 miles to the south-west, a wide range of German units were outflanked and finally completely cut off by the Red Army's winter counter-offensive. Major formations included the Army's 12, 30, 32, 223 and 290. Infanterie Divisions and the SS-Totenkopf-Division, as well as Police, Labour Corps and Organisation Todt units. These forces totalled around 100,000 men, of whom 14 per cent were killed or wounded during the fighting. The tenacious German defence tied down 18 Soviet divisions and several additional brigades; the Germans finally broke out of the pocket on 21 April 1942, but fighting in the area raged on for some time afterwards.

The shield was awarded to some 100,000 men before the final date of 1 April 1944. The criteria

for award were that the recipient:

- (i) Had served for 60 days with the forces in and around Demjansk between the specified dates; or
- (ii) Had been wounded while serving at Demjansk; or
- (iii) Had been decorated with any gallantry award for conduct while serving at Demjansk.

Luftwaffe personnel flying support and supply missions were also eligible, provided that they had flown at least 50 combat or supply missions over the Pocket.

The insignia consists of a pointed shield with slightly cut-back shoulders, surmounted by a plaque with the legend 'DEMJANSK'. Surmounting this again is a Wehrmacht-style folded-wing eagle clutching a wreathed mobile swastika, the latter between two loopholed log bunkers. In the upper part of the field of the shield itself is the front view of a stylised aircraft; below this, their points superimposed over its wings are a pair of crossed broadswords. Centred between their hilts at the base of the shield is the date '1942'. The *Demjanskschild* was stamped from either sheet white metal or zinc, with a silvered finish.

### The Kuban Shield

Very similar in overall design to the *Krimschild*, this award was instituted on 20 September 1943 to recognise those who had fought in the defensive battles around the Kuban bridgehead after 1 February 1943. Following the debacle at Stalingrad the Soviet offensive pushed German



forces in the southern USSR back into the Crimea, where they were effectively trapped in a giant cul-de-sac. Only the determined efforts of those troops which held the Kuban bridgehead allowed many of the German units to be evacuated by sea. The bridgehead finally crumbled only 19 days after the award was instituted.

Ground forces became eligible for the award if they had:

- (i) Served within the bridgehead for at least 60 days; or
- (ii) Been wounded while serving in the bridgehead; or
- (iii) Been involved in at least one major action during these defensive battles.

Luftwaffe and Navy personnel were also eligible, though their qualification for the award depended upon a rather complicated points system. For instance, in the Navy, service on a ship which had been lost to enemy action earned 60 points, while a U-Boat crewman involved in attacking enemy shipping in the area earned six points.

The insignia is a shield with a rounded bottom point, surmounted by a large spread-winged eagle. The wreathed mobile swastika clutched in its talons juts down over the upper part of the field, flanked by '19' and '43' at upper left and right respectively. Below the wreath a central plaque bears the legend 'KUBAN'; below this, the main field shows a stylised representation of the front line of the Kuban bridgehead with the place names 'Lagunen' at top right, 'Krymskaja' at left centre and, at bottom right in two lines, 'Noworo/ssijsk'.

#### **UNCONFIRMED CAMPAIGN SHIELDS:**

The aforementioned shields are the only ones which were formally instituted, put into volume production, awarded and worn during World War II. However, a number of other shields were authorised, some of which were manufactured (albeit in small numbers) and may have been issued, although as yet no evidence has emerged to confirm that they were actually worn.

#### **The Warsaw Shield**

Instituted on 10 December 1944, this proposed shield was intended to reward those troops who had taken part, under the command of SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, in the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising by the Polish Home Army between 1 August and 2 October 1944. The troops involved in this operation included some of the most unsavoury characters in the history of the Third Reich – particularly the renegade Russian brigade led by Bronislaw Kaminski; and the unit formed of German criminals released from prison specifically to serve in the brigade (later division – though in name only) commanded by the convicted sex-criminal Oskar Dirlewanger. These troops were responsible for a catalogue of atrocities so vile that they attracted complaints not merely from Army but also from SS officers. (Hermann Fegelein, former commander of the SS Cavalry Division in Russia and no stranger to ruthless 'anti-partisan' operations, on this occasion seems to have interceded with Hitler for the withdrawal of the Kaminski Brigade.)

The proposed design is known from original period artwork by its designer Benno von Arent. Sample styles for the proposed award document are also known from period references; and it is entirely possible that some shields may have been awarded 'on paper'.



The criteria for award were that the recipient had:

- (i) Served at Warsaw between the specified dates; and
- (ii) Had participated in at least seven days of combat; or
- (iii) Had been wounded in action; or
- (iv) Had been decorated for gallantry during the fighting; or
- (v) Had served in the zone for at least 28 days in a non-combatant (i.e. support) capacity.

Luftwaffe personnel were to be eligible after 20 combat missions over the zone.

There is absolutely no evidence that any shields – apart from a few sample strikings – were ever produced, and all existing examples are believed to be postwar copies from such samples. The insignia (see Plate D4a) consists of a bronze shield bearing a large folded-wing Wehrmacht-style eagle; superimposed below its neck is a mobile swastika, and immediately below this is a narrow banner with the legend 'WARSCHAU 1944'. Clutched in the eagle's talons is a writhing snake (note the similarity to the Anti-Partisan Battle Badge with its writhing serpents, recalling the fact that Von dem Bach-Zelewski was commander of anti-partisan forces).

### The Lorient Shield

This is one of the most contentious of German military awards from World War II. Following the breakout by Allied troops from the Normandy bridgehead in late July and August 1944, several by-passed German coastal garrisons held out against Allied encirclement and attack for lengthy periods. Some were irrelevant to the progress of the campaign, beyond their nuisance value in tying down Allied resources which could more usefully have been employed elsewhere; others denied the Allies important strategic ports. One of the former category was the 'fortress' of Lorient on the French Atlantic coast, formerly an important naval base which had housed two U-boat flotillas; it actually held out right up to the end of hostilities.

A shield to commemorate the defence of Lorient is said to have been designed by Marinebaurat Fehrenberg and submitted for approval to the base commander, Admiral Hennecke, who is said to have authorised its manufacture and issue some time in late 1944. (It is worth noting, however, that when approached for information in the late 1970s, the admiral insisted that he had no knowledge of the existence of such an insignia).

The insignia which has been illustrated (see Plate D4d) consists of a tall, narrow shield bearing a helmeted naked warrior figure standing astride the Lorient U-boat pens, armed with a sword and oval shield, the latter bearing an eagle and swastika emblem. To either side of the helmeted head are '19' and '44'.

All sorts of tales have circulated about shields being made up in a local fish cannery using tinplate, and even that at least 50 per cent of the garrison received the insignia (a figure which would have required the theoretical manufacture of anything up to 24,000 examples). This certainly is not supported by the testimony of veterans, of which Admiral Hennecke's is perhaps the most significant.

A number of apparently genuine Soldbuch entries exist, however, which would suggest that some sort of commemorative award was received, whether or not it was the shield in question. A few shields also



Major Hermann Graf, who spent most of his wartime career with Jagdgeschwader 52 on the Russian Front, was the Luftwaffe's ninth ranking fighter ace, with 212 confirmed aerial victories – all but ten of them in the East. He would later be one of only 27 German officers awarded the Oakleaves, Swastika and Diamonds to the Knight's Cross. Here, in the cockpit of a Messerschmitt Bf 109G, Major Graf wears the Crimea Shield on the left sleeve of his service tunic.



exist which have a provenance of sorts, which might suggest that they are genuine wartime originals. The shield may have been intended, and perhaps a few trial strikes were indeed made: but until verifiable evidence emerges to back up the theory of its production this version of the shield will continue to be regarded with considerable scepticism.

What is known for a fact, however, is that some troops of the garrison were issued with a commemorative piece, in the form of an identity disc blank stamped with the legend 'Festung Lorient 1944' using the standard numeral and letter die punches used to mark up regulation discs. Original examples of this type are known in private collections, some even still sewn on to the sleeves of the tunics of the original recipients. It is said that photographs exist of garrison personnel being marched into captivity in which this piece can be seen being worn. This award was not authorised under the Ordens-Gesetz of 1957 and so cannot be considered as officially approved.

### **The Lapland Shield**

Another area where German forces held out until the last day of the war was Lapland, the Arctic region of northern Norway occupied by XX Gebirgs Armee under Gen. Boehme, including mountain troops, infantry, Panzer and Luftwaffe ground troops. No exact date of institution or award criteria are known; but it is believed that approval for the shield was requested some time in late February 1945, and finally given on 1 May 1945.

Given the late date of the final approval it is unlikely that any actual awards were formally bestowed before the German surrender. However, an entry for the *Lapplandschild* may be found in numerous original paybooks – some of these being made as late as August 1945. The British troops who eventually took control of the area seem to have had a relatively decent working relationship with the German commanders whose surrender they had received. For some time after their disarmament the Germans were left largely to their own devices, under control of their own officers and with a functioning military bureaucracy. In deference to their captors Boehme's officers removed the swastika from most of the rubber stamps used for officially endorsing documents. Most original awards documents for the Lapland shield (of which there are a large number of variants) will therefore be found with dates after the end of hostilities, and devoid of any swastika.

The shield itself (see Plate D4c) also exists in several variant styles, mostly hand made or crudely cast; aluminium or zinc seem to be the most common materials used. The shield, rounded at the bottom, shows a map of the Lapland region with the legend 'LAPPLAND' on the 'sea' at the top. Surmounting this sits a rather crudely executed and scrawny-looking eagle, lacking the usual swastika and of a more French Napoleonic than a Germanic outline. These pieces seem to have been intended more as commemorative souvenirs, as no evidence has yet emerged of any actually being worn on uniform – although some examples have holes punched in the edges suggesting at least the intent that they be worn.

This award was not officially approved during the Ordens-Gesetz in 1957, presumably as no actual issues (as opposed to authorisation on paper) can be proven to have taken place prior to the end of hostilities.



### **The Dunkirk Shield**

This shield has been the subject of some confusion over the years. It is not part of the formal series of campaign shield awards; but it is included here because it was indeed manufactured and issued, and was intended to recognise participation in a particular action.

Like Lorient, the port of Dunkirk was cut off by the Allies after the breakout from the Normandy beachhead in the summer of 1944, but its garrison held out until the day of the final German surrender. The defenders were a mixed force of Army, Navy and Luftwaffe troops numbering some 15,000 in all, under the command of Konteradmiral Friedrich Frisius. The garrison put up an extremely pugnacious defence, and at one point even launched a counter-attack which took the surrounding Allies by surprise and caused some degree of alarm.

The Dunkirk Shield, which is believed to have been produced around the end of February 1945, is a small and rather crudely stamped thin sheet metal badge measuring about 4cm x 3.4cm. Below the legend 'DUENKIRCHEN' it shows a watchtower flanked by waves at either side, with a link chain below; either side of the top of the tower are the numerals '19' and '44'. This shield was not intended for wear on the sleeve, but for attaching to the side of the cap in much the same manner as the *Traditionsabzeichen* worn by U-boat crews and some Army elite units. In fact, in at least one original Soldbuch bearing an entry for this piece it is referred to as a *Mützenabzeichen* (cap badge).

The total number of awards made is thought to have been quite small, and it was certainly not issued to every member of the garrison. A number of examples have come to light in recent years, however, suggesting that although sparingly issued they were not quite as rare as first thought (or alternatively, that this award has now attracted the attention of forgers).

### **The Balkans Shield**

This shield was intended to reward those German units on active service in the Balkans in the latter part of the war, principally against Tito's partisans. It falls into the category of awards which were definitely designed and approved but seem never to have been issued. Original design artwork by Benno von Arant and dated 7 March 1945 exists, so at least we know what the intended final appearance was to be.

The basic design (see Plate D4b) consists of a sharply-pointed heater shield bearing the legend 'BALKAN' at the top, above a stylised map of the Balkan region; below the legend is superimposed an SS-style eagle and swastika national emblem, the wreathed mobile swastika flanked by '1944' and '1945' at left and right respectively.

Given that the artwork was only devised on 7 March 1945, it is inconceivable that this insignia could have passed through final approval, test sample, full production and issue in the two months that remained of the war. Certainly there is no credible evidence to suggest that the *Balkanschild* was ever put into production or awarded. In any case, the Anti-Partisan Badge already covered actions against Tito's forces in the Balkans, so further recognition in the form of a campaign shield may have been considered superfluous. Needless to add, fakes of this award are widely available.

*(continued on page 33)*



ASSAULT BADGES  
& CAMPAIGN SHIELD, 1940  
See text commentaries for details

1



2



3



4









NORTH AFRICA, 1941-43  
See text commentaries for details





## 1

See text commentaries for details

2



4d



1



'SECOND GENERATION'  
BATTLE BADGES, 1943-44  
See text commentaries  
for details

2



3



4





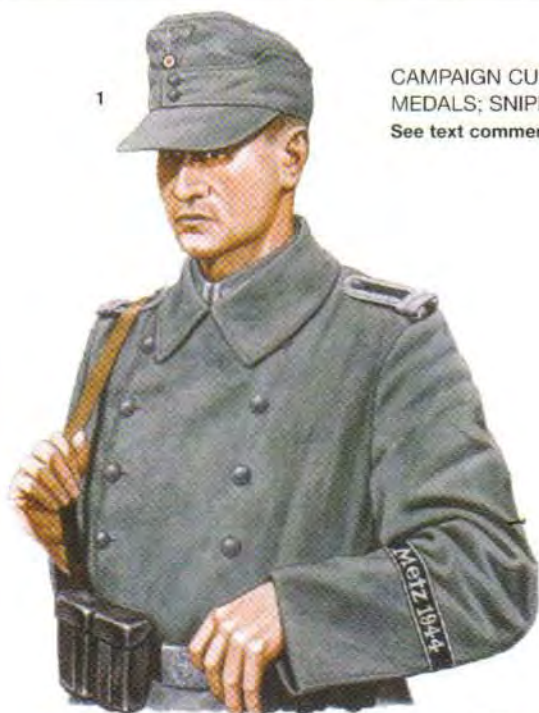


LUFTWAFFE BATTLE BADGES,  
1944-45  
See text commentaries for details





1



CAMPAIGN CUFFBANDS &  
MEDALS; SNIPER BADGE  
See text commentaries for details

2



4a



3

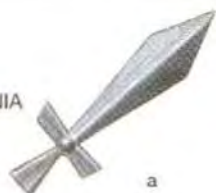


4b





UNIT LEVEL  
DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA  
See text  
commentaries  
for details



a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h



i



j



k



l



m



n



o



p



q



r



s



t



u



v



There also exist a number of proposed designs for shields which for various reasons never progressed as far as the approval of the basic design, so that all posterity is left with are the most tentative of preliminary sketches. These include shields to commemorate the successful defence of Stalingrad (a project which was abandoned for obvious reasons); the defence of Memel (possibly only a unit-level award); and the defence of Budapest (again, a proposal which was quickly forgotten after the city fell). Shields commemorating the successful defence of Arnhem are a post-war invention which first appeared in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Equally spurious are those shields showing the so-called Stalingrad Cross as worn by the 'Hoch und Deutschmeister' Regiment (see below under Unit Level Insignia).

## MEDALS

### **The Eastern Winter 1941/42 Campaign Medal (*Medaille Winterschlacht im Osten 1941/42* or '*Ostmedaille*')**

Unique in that it was designed by a serving combat soldier, this award was instituted on 26 May 1942, to reward those who had taken part in the first winter campaign in Russia between 15 November 1941 and 15 April 1942. It was open to all qualifying personnel, military or civil, male or female; many civilian administrators and technical specialists from e.g. construction, road-building and maintenance firms, etc, were present in the theatre of operations, as were nurses and female auxiliaries.

The qualifying criteria were that the recipient had to have:

- (i) Spent at least two weeks on combat operations in the specified area between the specified dates; or
- (ii) Spent at least 60 days in the area, not necessarily on combat operations; or
- (iii) Been wounded in action; or
- (iv) Suffered serious frostbite for which a wound badge was bestowed. (This last provision resulted in the medal being widely known by the macabre nickname *Gefrierfleischorden*, 'Frozen Meat Order'.)

The medal, designed by SS-Unterscharführer Ernst Kraus, measures some 3.6cm in diameter. At the top edge a Wehrmacht steel helmet incorporating the suspension loop lies over a horizontal stick grenade. On the obverse the central motif is a Wehrmacht-style folded-wing eagle clutching an unwreathed static swastika, with a branch of laurel leaves running diagonally behind the latter. The reverse bears the legend 'WINTERSCHLACHT/ IM OSTEN/ 1941/42' over a small crossed sword and laurel branch.

The medal is finished in a dark gunmetal colour with the outer rim and the helmet-and-grenade suspender polished bright silver. The loop on the helmet engages with a suspension ring, through which is folded a scarlet ribbon with a narrow vertical black centre line edged each side with white.

The handsome campaign medal for the first winter on the Eastern Front, 1941/42, cast in gunmetal colour with silver-polished details; see also Plate G4a.





In the usual German fashion, the medal itself was worn only on the actual day of its presentation, and thereafter on special formal or parade occasions when it was displayed on a parade-mounted ribbon bar. At all other times only the ribbon was worn, either through the buttonhole of the tunic or on a miniature ribbon bar above the left breast pocket (but never both together).

### **The Spanish Anti-Bolshevik Volunteers Medal (*Erinnerungsmedaille für die Spanischen Freiwilligen im Kampf gegen Bolschewismus*)**

Although Hitler maintained good relations with General Franco, all German attempts to persuade the Spanish dictator to bring Spain into the war on the Axis side were to prove vain. There was, however, no shortage of Spanish Falangists willing to serve on a voluntary basis in the 'crusade against Bolshevism'; and a full division of such troops was formed in July 1941 as the 250. Infanterie-Division, popularly known as the 'Blue Division' from the colour of the shirts worn by the Spanish Falangist movement<sup>1</sup>.

Commanded initially by Gen. Augustin Muñoz Grandes, the division fought well but suffered heavy losses. National pride demanded that the division not be allowed to collapse, so a constant flow of replacements kept it at relatively full strength. It has been estimated that well over 40,000 volunteers served with the division at some point or other in its brief life. The division was finally ordered by Franco to disband on 14 October 1943, but as a number of the original volunteers were still keen to carry on the fight a Volunteer Legion of some 1,500 men was permitted to remain. They continued to serve on the Eastern Front until they too were ordered

home in March 1944. Even then, many of the Spaniards were so committed to the battle against communism that they refused to return to Spain and were formed into a Spanish volunteer unit of the Waffen-SS, in which most continued to serve until the end of the war.

The medal was introduced on 3 January 1944 and seems to have been awarded to all who had served with the 'Blue Division'. It was made principally by the Munich firm of Deschler. The medal is 32mm in diameter. On the centre of the obverse is a German helmet above a pair of shields superimposed on a horizontal sword; the left-hand shield shows the Wehrmacht eagle, and that on the right the yoked arrows insignia of the Falange. Below these shields is a static swastika flanked by small horizontal sprays of laurel leaves. The reverse of the medal carries the legend 'DIVISION/ ESPAÑOLA/ DE/ VOLUNTARIOS/ EN/ RUSIA', above a spray of laurel and oak leaves, above an Iron Cross. The medal was struck from zinc and finished in a pale golden bronze colour. The suspension ribbon was scarlet with black and white edge stripes and a gold central stripe.



The campaign medal awarded to Spanish volunteers in the German Army's 250. Infanterie-Division for service on the Eastern Front; see also Plate G4b. This decoration was only instituted in January 1944, four months after the 'Division Azul' had been disbanded and most Spanish personnel repatriated, although several hundred former members insisted on remaining with their German comrades and fought on to the end.



It should be emphasised that the 'Blue Division' was not a Spanish Army formation but a numbered division of the German Army which was manned by Spanish volunteers. German uniforms and the normal range of Wehrmacht insignia of rank, etc, were always worn when on active service; but full awards were worn at all times, in Spanish fashion, rather than the ribbon alone in the German style.

### **The Italo-German Medal for the Campaign in Africa**

Strictly speaking this is not a German award, having been commissioned and manufactured in Italy. However, it was issued and worn, for a time at least, by German military personnel, and so is included here for interest's sake. It was bestowed by the Italian government from early 1942 upon soldiers who had served in North Africa; but following the Italian surrender in September 1943 an order was promulgated on 20 March 1944 by the German authorities prohibiting any further wearing of this award by German personnel.



The Italian commemorative medal for the Italo-German campaign in North Africa; see also Plate C3e.

Manufactured principally by the firm of Lorioli in Milan, the medal is some 31mm in diameter, and has a rather crude integral bar or bracket suspender rather than a ring attachment. Early examples were made in good quality bronze, but later issues were in grey zinc. On the obverse are depicted two armoured warriors shoulder to shoulder, representing the Axis nations, wrestling with the jaws of a crocodile, representing the Allies. The reverse shows the triumphal Felini arch built by Mussolini to mark Italian conquests in North Africa, flanked by the Italian fasces symbol and the German swastika; below the base of the arch is the knotted rope emblem of the Italian

royal house of Savoy. Around the edge of the reverse is inscribed 'CAMPAGNA ITALO-TEDESCA IN AFRICA' and 'ITALIENISCH-DEUTSCHER FELDZUG IN AFRIKA'. The medal was suspended from a 25mm ribbon with equal vertical stripes of black/white/red/white/green – the national colours of Germany and Italy.

## **AIR FORCE INSIGNIA**

### **The Anti-Aircraft Battle Badge (*Flak Kampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe*)**

This award was instituted on 10 January 1941, initially to reward anti-aircraft units involved in the defence of the Reich. As with the Army version, qualification originally depended upon a points system, an accumulated total of 16 points being required for the bestowal of the award. For each enemy aircraft shot down by a single gun crew each man was credited with four points, and two points were awarded for each 'kill' shared with another gun. Sound detection and searchlight crews were credited with one point for each detection. The badge could also be awarded for ground engagements, e.g. against enemy tanks; awards on this basis were made after three separate engagements on different days. The battery commander would also become eligible once at least half of



his gun crews had earned the award.

The badge, designed by Wilhelm Ernst Peekhaus, consists of a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves with a Luftwaffe-style flying eagle and swastika national emblem superimposed at the top. Within the wreath an 8.8cm anti-aircraft gun points skywards with its barrel breaking through the wreath at top right. Typical overall dimensions are 63mm x 45mm. The eagle was struck as a separate piece and soldered

to the top of the wreath. Early examples were struck from Tombak and finely silver-plated; later pieces were in zinc with a simple silver wash. This badge also existed in embroidered form, presumably for inexpensive wear on combat clothing, though the rarity of this type suggests that it was seldom worn.

Unlike most war badges, the Air Force Flak Battle Badge often came – at least in the first part of the war – in a high-quality protective case. Covered in blue leather-effect paper, the box was lined with blue velvet to the base and blue satin to the lid interior; the exterior of the lid bore in silver Gothic script the printed legend 'Flak-Kampf-Abz'. As the war progressed cheaper card boxes were used, and ultimately simple paper envelopes.

### **The Ground Combat Badge** **(*Erdkampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe*)**

The coveted paratrooper badge worn by the elite Fallschirmjäger was a qualification badge reflecting that they had successfully completed jump training, and was analogous to an Allied paratrooper's 'wings'. There was no specific badge to recognise their subsequent participation in combat. The same applied to those troops landed by glider, or indeed any other Luftwaffe ground units such as the Air Force Field Divisions (of which 22 eventually existed), or the powerful and hard-fighting 'Hermann Göring' Division. Those Luftwaffe personnel who qualified were awarded the appropriate Army assault badge.

On 31 March 1942, however, a new combat award was instituted. Designed by Professor von Weech, the Ground Combat Badge of the Luftwaffe was intended to reward Luftwaffe personnel who:

- (i) Had participated in three separate ground combat actions on different dates; or
- (ii) Were wounded in action during ground combat; or
- (iii) Were awarded a military decoration such as the Iron Cross for participation in ground combat; or
- (iv) Were killed in action during ground combat, in which case a posthumous award was made.



**ABOVE LEFT** The Luftwaffe's Anti-Aircraft Battle Badge. The design is very similar to that of the Army, the substitution of the Air Force's 'flying' eagle for the Army's folded-wing type being the only significant difference.

**ABOVE RIGHT** The Ground Combat Badge of the Luftwaffe instituted on 31 March 1942. The better quality examples, like the badge illustrated, were multi-part die strikings with the bright silver eagle made separately and riveted on during manufacture.



On the introduction of this badge, any Army pattern awards such as the Infantry Assault Badge, etc, were to be handed in and exchanged for this new Luftwaffe award. The badge consists of a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves measuring 56mm x 43mm, with a Luftwaffe-style flying eagle superimposed at the top. Within the upper part of the wreath was a dark storm cloud from which emerged a bolt of lightning striking the ground below. In most examples the eagle is a separate piece soldered or riveted to the wreath, but in late war examples the badge was cast in one piece. The wreath and eagle are in matt silver finish while the storm cloud and centre of the lightning bolt are chemically blackened (or painted, in late war one-piece castings). The badge was also manufactured in embroidered form, but this variant is extremely rare.

As with the Flak Battle Badge, early examples came in a good-quality box covered in blue leather-effect paper, the top printed 'Erdkampf Abz der Luftwaffe' in silver Gothic script. Later examples came in card boxes or paper packets.

On 10 November 1944 an additional range of badges were authorised to reflect the recipient's participation in 25, 50, 75 or 100 ground combat actions. Unlike corresponding Army numbered awards, which showed a distinct design difference between the 25/50 and 75/100 patterns, all the Luftwaffe numbered badges were virtually identical in design apart from the number itself. The numbered badge was very similar to the standard insignia except for a slightly wider base to the wreath, the presence of the numbered box, and a spray of oak leaves at each side of this box.

It is now widely accepted that at least the '25' actions version and possibly the '50' were actually manufactured. Examples exist which match almost exactly the manufacturing style of the better quality standard badges, with separate eagle attached by rivets, and a wide vertical hinged pin. As yet, however, there appears to be a lack of hard evidence that such badges were ever actually awarded.

Both the standard and numbered types were re-authorised in 1957 in a form which differs only in the removal of the swastika from the eagle's talons.



The 25-engagement version of the Ground Combat Badge, instituted on 10 November 1944. Note the slight alterations to the base of the wreath to accommodate the numbered 'box'; and the silver finish of the eagle and wreath against the chemically darkened zinc of the cloud and lightning-bolt.

### **The Tank Battle Badge (Panzerkampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe)**

Instituted on 3 November 1944, this insignia was intended to reward the now considerable number of personnel who were serving in the Luftwaffe's own tank units. Prior to this date the Tank Battle Badge of the Army had been worn by qualifying members of these units.

The Luftwaffe badge is similar in concept to the Army version, consisting of a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves with a stylised representation of a tank in the centre, but with a Luftwaffe-style flying eagle superimposed at the top. Overall dimensions are 55mm x 46mm. The badge came in two distinct versions. For tank crews, tank repair crews and medical personnel serving in tank units the wreath is in silver and the tank is chemically blackened. For members of Luftwaffe armoured infantry units, medical personnel attached to such units, and armoured reconnaissance personnel the badge is entirely black with the exception of the Luftwaffe eagle, which remains silver. With such a late institution date, the badge was only ever made in zinc.





**The Tank Battle Badge of the Luftwaffe.** It was produced in two versions: silver (left) for personnel of tank units, and black (right) for armoured infantry and armoured reconnaissance units. The difference was to the colour of the wreath only; for both versions the eagle was in silver and the central motif in chemically darkened finish. These Air Force badges depict the same sort of heavily stylised PzKw III tank as the '25/50' numbered version of the Army *Panzerkampfabzeichen*, differing from the original design in having a slightly longer, slimmer gun barrel which touches the wreath.

evidence to support the actual issue of the badge has emerged but, as has happened in the past with so many other late war awards, it may do so in the future.

A numbered version of the badge indicating participation in 25, 50, 75 or 100 actions was also approved. The basic badge was to be in the same form for all four types: slightly larger than the standard pattern, with the lower part to the wreath enlarged to take the numbered 'box', it was to have had the tank made as a separate piece attached to the badge by rivets. There is certainly no evidence to suggest any awards of this type being made; nevertheless, it was re-authorised in a new de-Nazified form in 1957 – as were the basic patterns – with only the swastika removed.

### **The Sea Battle Badge (*Seekampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe*)**

Instituted on 27 November 1944, this badge was intended to reward those Luftwaffe personnel who served aboard ship, and included such examples as the crews of air-sea rescue launches, Flak ships, weather reporting vessels under Luftwaffe command, etc. The criteria for award included:

- For personnel serving on supply ships, etc, either
  - (i) 60 days at sea in northern or north-eastern waters between 5 and 20 degrees longitude and south of the 60th latitude; or
  - (ii) 20 days at sea in the Mediterranean, Aegean or Black Seas.

- For personnel serving on air-sea rescue launches, etc, either:
  - (i) 20 days at sea, where either at least one rescue attempt was made, or where the sortie lasted at least three hours; or
  - (ii) A minimum of ten days at sea, on each of which a successful rescue was made.

A 'day at sea' was one which lasted for not less than ten hours; days of less than ten hours could be counted towards a cumulative total, but in such cases a total of 14 hours of 'partial days' was required to equate to a single full ten-hour day. The usual provisions were also made for the award to be bestowed to personnel showing particular bravery or proficiency.

Genuine examples of the badge certainly exist, as do award documents indicating the granting of the award, on paper at least. What is still uncertain is whether any of these award documents were accompanied by an actual example of the badge, or whether these were pure 'paper awards', and those original striking which are known are simply trial stampings or stocks which, though manufactured, never reached the troops at the front. So far no firm



The badge was certainly authorised and manufactured at least in trial patterns, since an actual example was illustrated in the formal announcement of the badge. The insignia consists of a vertical oval wreath of oak leaves with the usual Luftwaffe flying eagle superimposed at the top. In the centre is a representation of a ship bows-on, rolling in a heavy sea. The eagle is silver, the wreath gilt, and the central motif chemically darkened. Overall dimensions are 64mm x 44mm.

Actual award documents exist, proving that this piece was awarded at least 'on paper'; however, no original examples of the badge which have been formally awarded are known. This badge was also re-authorised and produced in de-Nazified form in 1957. Most of the examples touted as originals are in fact 're-Nazified' 1957 pieces which use the same small eagle as the Ground Combat Badge – the original wartime strikes used a larger eagle of the type found on the Luftwaffe Flak Battle Badge.



The controversial Sea Battle Badge of the Luftwaffe – the example shown is a post-war reproduction. This award was definitely bestowed, as confirmed by original wartime award documents, but no photographic evidence has yet emerged to establish that the badge itself was ever issued.

### Close Combat Clasp (*Nahkampfspange der Luftwaffe*)

This award, instituted by Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring on 3 November 1944, was directly analogous to the Close Combat Clasp of the Army. Indeed, before its introduction any Luftwaffe personnel who fulfilled the qualification criteria (predominantly paratroops but also members of the 'HG' Division and a few of the field divisions) received the Army version.

The Air Force *Nahkampfspange* was based on the design of the large range of Luftwaffe Operational Flight Clasps, comprising a circular central wreath of laurel leaves between two wing-like sprays of oak leaves. The central wreath differs from that of the flight clasps in lacking a small swastika at the base. In the centre of the wreath, made as a separate piece and attached by rivets, is a standard Luftwaffe flying eagle clutching a swastika above a crossed stick grenade and bayonet.



The award was produced in three grades: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Only the colour of the basic clasp changed, the central motif remaining silver in all cases. The Bronze clasp was awarded for 15 days of close combat, the Silver for 30 days and the Gold for 50 days.

This is another of the very late war awards which has been the subject of much controversy. It is certain that awards were made 'on paper', as surviving documents and paybook entries refer to the *Nahkampfspange der Luftwaffe*. However, whether these documents were actually accompanied by examples of the Luftwaffe version, as opposed to the Army version, is still in doubt. Rumours persist of veterans who claim to have been awarded the Luftwaffe pattern, but as yet firm proof is still not forthcoming. As with the Tank Battle and Sea Battle badges of the Luftwaffe, a photograph of an actual example accompanying the publication of the original institution announcement proves that at least trial stampings were indeed manufactured.

The Close Combat Clasp of the Luftwaffe in Silver. The central motif remains silver in all cases, with the laurel wreath and oak leaf sprays coloured bronze, silver or gold as appropriate.



## THE WOUND BADGE (*Verwundetenabzeichen*)



The Wound Badge, here a Silver grade example. Its design remained faithful to the original Imperial concept, with only a minor modernisation of the helmet design and the addition of the National Socialist swastika.

General der Gebirgstruppe Eduard Dietl, 'the hero of Narvik'. It is interesting to note that, contrary to regulations, this famous general of Mountain Troops wears both the World War I and World War II patterns of Wound Badge side by side. (Josef Charita)



Some thought was given to the question of whether or not to include this badge here. It was not given only for specific campaigns or types of service. It was, however, closely related to the combat badges – as specified in the qualification criteria for various battle badges quoted above, very often the award of a wound badge was accompanied by the bestowal of the relevant combat award if this was not already held. Finally, of course, the mere fact that they were awarded for wounds suffered in action makes these badges true 'battle insignia' in the most undeniable sense. (It should perhaps be pointed out that wounds received during the course of their duties by members of the largely civilian-manned Luftschutz air raid defence organisation also qualified for award of one of the three grades of Wound Badge.)

The Wound Badge was instituted on 1 September 1939, but simply continued a tradition which had begun in World War I. The insignia consists of a vertical oval wreath of laurel leaves. In the centre of the wreath is a solid stipple-finished field upon which rests a left-facing German steel helmet superimposed upon crossed broadswords. The 1939 version differs from its predecessors in featuring the M1935 helmet shape, with a mobile swastika on its side, and has a regular oval outline. The Imperial badge features an M1916 helmet, obviously without a swastika, and its outline follows the actual contour of the laurel leaves.

A 1936 version was also produced for award to those German volunteers for the Condor Legion who were wounded during the Spanish Civil War. This was based on the Imperial pattern but had a swastika added to the M1916 helmet. Stocks of these 'Spanish' pattern badges were still being awarded in the early part of World War II.

The Wound Badge was produced in three grades: Black, Silver and Gold. The Black version was awarded at the time a soldier was first wounded. These were generally made from hollow stamped sheet metal with a painted finish.

The Silver version was awarded after the soldier's third wound, or after a single serious wound which caused partial disablement such as the loss of a limb, partial blindness, deafness, etc.

The Gold version was awarded after the soldier's fifth wound, or after a single serious wound which caused severe disablement such as total blindness, loss of both legs, etc.

The Silver and Gold grades were usually solid strikings. Early pieces were of plated Tombak, but examples of later manufacture were of anodised or lacquered zinc. Some extremely late examples of the Silver and Gold badges were hollow struck thin sheet steel with a painted finish.

Although the Black grade was usually issued in a paper envelope, the Silver and Gold badges were normally given in a small presentation case, the colours and construction of which could vary widely.

Following the abortive attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944, a special version of the Wound Badge was produced for those who sustained wounds in the explosion. This special badge was produced by the Berlin firm of C.E.Juncker, who hand cast and finished all examples





The special version of the Wound Badge awarded to those who were injured in the 20 July 1944 bomb attempt on Hitler's life. The helmet has been moved further up the field to accommodate the date and facsimile of Hitler's signature.

in solid hallmarked silver. The new version was very similar to the standard badge but with the helmet moved up slightly so that the field below could accommodate a facsimile signature of Adolf Hitler and date '20.Juli/1944'. All the original award badges were marked '800' (for the silver content) and '2' (the official company code for Juncker) on the reverse.

These badges, like the standard form, were produced in three grades. The Black version was chemically darkened, though the pebbled field in the centre was left silver. The Silver badge was wholly silver; and the Gold badge was gold-plated silver but with the central field left in silver finish. Genuine examples are, of course, of the highest rarity. Fakes abound, mostly stamped 'L/12' (the alternative company marking of C.E. Juncker, used on commercial products), though this mark was also used on copies made at the time for patriotic museum displays, etc.

## UNIT LEVEL INSIGNIA

During the course of the war a number of unit level insignia were produced. These badges had no official standing as such, but were highly regarded by the men serving in these units, and were a valuable tool for maintaining morale and *esprit de corps*. Several were intended to commemorate participation in specific battles, while others were simply unit insignia. In some known cases, however, entries were made in the wearer's Soldbuch indicating his right to wear the badge, thus bringing some of these insignia nearer to the status of 'awards' which had to be earned, albeit only on a semi-official basis.

This work does not include those badges which were issued to a particular branch of the armed services, such as the Mountain Troops' Edelweiss badge, but only those which were used by specific individual units. A selection of some of the more interesting pieces is given here (and see Plate H), but almost certainly others will exist. As often as not these would only be worn on active service on the combat uniform and not in walking-out dress when home on leave or on formal occasions, so that photographs of them in wear have considerable rarity interest.

### Divisions

**1. Kavallerie-Division** A white metal badge worn on the left side of the cap – within a circular border a rider on horseback leaping over an obstacle.

**1. Panzer-Division** Widely worn within the division, this was a thin sheet metal stamping showing a single oak leaf, the tactical sign of the division. It had a number of holes around the edge for sewing to the left side of the field cap.

**3. Panzer-Division** A tilted metal 'cross of Lorraine' shape with two diagonal crossbars on the vertical, worn on the left side of the cap.

**4. Kavallerie-Division** In 1944–45 this formation wore a cloth patch of broadly proportioned shield shape on the upper right sleeve; in brownish yellow cloth with a double black border, it bore in black outline twin horses' heads facing outwards.



**4. Gebirgs-Division** An Enzian (gentian) flower in blue on a shield-shaped backing 23mm x 12mm. This was worn next to the Edelweiss badge on the side of the mountain cap.

**5. Gebirgs-Division** A stylised mountain goat standing on a three-peaked mountaintop. In silver coloured metal and measuring 25 x 10mm, it was worn next to the Edelweiss on the side of the mountain cap.

**16. Panzer-Division** A black metal shield with raised silver border; in the centre, the division's tactical sign of a silver 'crossed Y' rune with a horizontal bar across the vertical. Worn on the left side of the cap.

**19. Panzer-Division** A bronze or gilt 'Wolfsangel' rune superimposed on a silver-grey lozenge shape – the conventional map symbol for 'tank' – with raised border. Worn on the left side of the cap.

**23. Panzer-Division** A so-called 'arrow cross' measuring 4cm x 1.2cm in silver-coloured metal, worn at a 45 degree angle on the side of the cap. It was also worn as a sleeve patch, fixed to a shield-shaped piece of black cloth with white or aluminium braid edging, on the upper right sleeve.

**34. Infanterie-Division** A metal shield with a yellow field and black border, with a black wavy line running from upper right to lower left. This pin-back badge, measuring 21mm x 16mm, appeared at some time in 1944.

**90. Panzergrenadier-Division (Sardinia Shield)** A stylised map of Sardinia with a sword overlaid from lower right to upper left; at the top right corner is shown the location 'OLBIA' and at bottom centre 'CAGLIARI'. Measuring 26mm x 16mm, it was worn on the side of the cap by members of this division from July 1943. A second insignia is also known for this division, which is believed to have been issued as a merit badge to deserving individuals by the commanding general, General Baade. This metal 'Springender Reiter' badge showed the silhouette of a leaping horse with rider.

**116. Panzer-Division** The 'Windhund' or Greyhound Division wore a small black metal oval with silver border showing in the centre a greyhound leaping over three grass tussocks. It was pinned to the left side of the cap.

**290. Infanterie-Division** A small broad-bladed metal sword worn on the side of the field cap, 30mm x 10mm. This was the tactical symbol of the division, and is believed to have begun being worn as a cap emblem in late 1944.

## **Regiments and battalions**

### **Kavallerie-Regiment 5 (Prussian Death's-Head)**

The traditional 'jawless' white metal skull and crossbones had been worn on the headgear by 1. and 2. Leib-Husaren-Regimenter of the Prussian Army. The traditions of the 1st Lifeguard Hussars, and the right to wear the death's-head as a cap badge between the eagle and swastika emblem and the national cockade, passed to the regimental staff and I Btl, Kavallerie-Regiment 5. It was also used as a shoulder strap emblem, embroidered for other ranks, in white metal for NCOs and in gilt metal for officers. With the re-formation of cavalry regiments in Russia in 1943 this tradition badge passed to Kavallerie-Regiment Nord, later retitled Kavallerie-Regiment 5 'Feldmarschall von Mackensen'.

### **Kavallerie-Regiment 6 (Dragoon Eagle)**

Recalling Brandenburg Dragoon Regiment No.2 of the Imperial German Army, this yellow metal tradition badge was authorised for wear



on caps by the regimental staff and 2nd and 4th Sqns, Kavallerie-Regiment 6. It was retained by divisional *recce* units formed from the regiment upon wartime mobilisation, e.g. Kradschützen-Bataillon Nr.3 and Aufklärungs-Abteilung 33. It passed to Kavallerie-Regiment Mitte in 1943, and thereafter to units of 3.Kavallerie-Division.

#### **Kavallerie-Regiment 13 & Infanterie-Regiment 17 (Brunswick Death's-Head)**

The traditional Brunswick complete skull with crossed bones, in a 'head-on' presentation, was worn on caps of all kinds by a small number of units. Recalling the headgear insignia of the 'Black Brunswickers' of the Napoleonic Wars, which had been commemorated in the Imperial German Army on the *Pickelhaube* plates of Brunswick Infantry Regiment No.92, it subsequently passed as a tradition badge to 1st and 4th Cos, Infanterie-Regiment 17; this honour was later extended to the regimental staff, 1st and 2nd Bns, and 13th and 14th Companies. The same insignia was also worn in Imperial days by Brunswick Hussar Regiment No.17, and in this case it passed to 2 Abteilung, Kavallerie-Regiment 13. When cavalry regiments were re-formed in Russia in 1943 the badge passed to Kavallerie-Regiment Sud, which later became Reiter-Regiment 41.

#### **Infanterie-Regiment 134 (Stalingrad Cross)**

This insignia was officially awarded to members of Infanterie-Regiment 134 of Reichsgrenadier-Division 'Hoch und Deutschmeister' on 23 March 1944, to commemorate the sacrifices of the Austrian-raised 44.Infanterie-Division at Stalingrad in winter 1942/43. The traditions of the annihilated division would henceforth be maintained by the regiment, renamed Grenadierregiment 'Hoch und Deutschmeister'. The insignia, worn on the shoulder straps, consists of a gilt alloy cross with a central superimposed eagle and swastika on a shield over a banner bearing the legend 'STALINGRAD'. The background field of each arm of the cross is painted light blue.

**schwere-Panzer-Abteilung 503** Some time in early 1944 members of this independent heavy tank battalion began to sport a badge on the left side of the field cap, in the form of a silhouette of a Königstiger.

**Sonderverband Bergmann** A traditional Russian *kindjal* knife with curving blade, worn on the left side of the cap. Made from yellow metal, it was 7cm long.

**Mountain Troops medallions (Sankt Ulrich)** A range of small unofficial medallions was produced for numerous mountain regiments; analogous to the St Christopher medallion of travellers, the St Ulrich medallions were effectively good luck tokens for the Gebirgsjäger. They were suspended, usually by a leather or fabric thong, from the button on the fob pocket of the trousers, or from the waist belt, and can sometimes be seen in photographs hanging below the edge of the tunic front. Designs varied: some were square, some round, some oval. The motifs upon them usually included the Edelweiss flower, representations of mountain peaks, and occasionally the mountain goat or 'Gams'. A typical example of one of the many variants is illustrated as Plate H(t); in this case the medallion of 2nd Bn, Mountain Rifle Regiment 91, it lists all the peaks conquered by the unit during its advance into the Caucasus, with the dates, and the height of the summits in metres.



## THE PLATES

### A: ASSAULT BADGES & CAMPAIGN SHIELD, 1939-40

**A1:** A Feldwebel from Infanterie-Regiment 36 during the campaign in France, where this unit performed well with its parent 9. Infanterie-Division as part of Panzergruppe von Kleist. As his regiment prepares to take part in the entry into Paris this NCO has just been decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class and the *Infanterie Sturmabzeichen* in silver. The Iron Cross 2nd Class itself was normally worn only on the day of presentation; thereafter only the ribbon would be worn, in the tunic buttonhole.

**A2:** A young Panzer crewman from Panzer-Regiment 3 just after the conclusion of the Polish campaign, in which this unit saw heavy action in the central sector of the front, where severe losses were inflicted upon it by the tenacious Polish defenders. He wears the early Panzer beret and first type *Panzerjacke*; on the left breast he proudly sports the *Panzerkampfabzeichen* indicating his participation in at least three separate actions.

**A3:** This Gefreiter from Pionier-Bataillon 12, active in the defence of the so-called 'Panzer Corridor' against Anglo-French counter-attacks during the French campaign, wears the *Allgemeines Sturmabzeichen*. He has also been wounded in action, and the Wound Badge in Black appears alongside the assault badge.

**A4:** The battle of Narvik in Norway was a true example of inter-service co-operation, a fact which was reflected in the design features of the Narvik campaign shield. This young Luftwaffe Oberfeldwebel pilot, having flown several missions in support of his Mountain Rifles comrades, wears the silver version of the *Narvikschild* on a grey-blue cloth patch on his upper left sleeve.

### B: ANTI-AIRCRAFT & ANTI-TANK BADGES, & CAMPAIGN CUFFBAND

**B1:** The German Army made very effective use of light Flak (anti-aircraft) guns in their intended role, and also against ground targets. One of the most potent of these weapons was the quadruple 2cm Flakvierling on a half-track mount. This crewman of such a weapon in the late summer of 1941 wears an example of the newly introduced *Flakabzeichen*, indicating at least four aircraft shot down by his gun crew alone, or eight in collaboration with another crew.

**B2:** The Luftwaffe, too, made versatile use of its Flak guns, especially the superlative 8.8cm dual purpose weapon, which proved so effective in the anti-tank role. With the lighter main armament mounted by the early Panzers often ineffective against heavily armoured Soviet tanks such as the KV1 and KV2, it often fell to the Flak units armed with the long-ranged and hard-hitting '88' to take on these behemoths. Ultimately, with the introduction of the Luftwaffe Ground Combat Badge, the Flak Badge would revert to being awarded only for shooting down aircraft. This Flak Unteroffizier gun crewman, however, has received his badge as a mark of his success as a 'Panzerknacker'.

**B3:** This paratrooper Oberfeldwebel wears the 'KRETA' campaign cuffband on his lower left sleeve. Although the Fallschirmjäger Badge – pinned to his left breast next to his Iron Cross 1st Class – was worn with immense pride, it was an insignia of qualification rather than a combat award. It is



Feldwebel Willi Zimmermann, a platoon leader in 5th Co, Gren-Regt 80, wearing the Infantry Assault Badge and the Close Combat Clasp in Bronze. Note the braid loops around the end of his shoulder straps, identifying him as a probationary officer candidate.

his cuff title alone which marks him out as a veteran of the German paratroopers' most costly battle, and the first massed airborne assault in history.

**B4:** Among the most dangerous of all tasks that fell to the German soldier was tackling enemy tanks and other armoured vehicles with only light infantry weapons. Satchel charges, multiple grenades and later the highly effective *Panzerschreck* and *Panzerfaust* – as shown here – were the 'tools of the trade' of the infantry tank-killer teams. As a visible sign of his courage and skill, this Unteroffizier wears on his right sleeve three awards of the Special Badge for Single-Handed Destruction of a Tank.

### C: NORTH AFRICA, 1941-43

**C1a & C1b:** One of the most interesting insignia to emerge from the North African campaign was that of the special forces unit *Sonderverband 288*. This comprised a wreath of laurel with a swastika at its base, enclosing a rising sun motif and a palm tree. The first examples made in 1941 were in metal and were worn pinned to the left breast pocket in the manner of a battle badge – a fashion which received at least tacit approval. In late 1942, however, a new woven version was introduced which was to be worn as a unit emblem on



the right sleeve. Photographic evidence suggests that it was also occasionally worn on the left sleeve.

**C2:** Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger served in North Africa with the Ramcke Parachute Brigade, some of whom had already served in the battle of Crete – they would eventually qualify for both the 'KRETA' and 'AFRIKA' cuffbands. General Ramcke's paratroopers arrived in North Africa in July 1942, shortly after the institution of the new Ground Combat Badge of the Luftwaffe. This Leutnant, having completed the required participation in three separate combat actions, now sports the new insignia alongside his Fallschirmjäger Badge.

**C3:** The 'AFRIKA' campaign cuffband was instituted only on 15 January 1943, so it is thought unlikely that many, if any, found their way into the hands of troops serving in North Africa before the final surrender of Axis troops in Tunisia in May 1943. This Panzergrenadier, though still in tropical uniform, is therefore one of those who escaped via Sicily on to the Italian mainland, where his award was made. Note the bronze version of the Infantry Assault Badge awarded to these motorised infantry units of armoured divisions.

A range of other Africa campaign decorations existed, though only the 'Afrika with palms' cuffband had the formal status of a decoration. Shown here are **(C3a)** the original unofficial 'AFRIKAKORPS' formation cuffband; **(C3b)** the official pattern instituted in July 1941; **(C3c)** the Luftwaffe 'AFRIKA' cuffband; and **(C3d)** the Kriegsmarine version. Also shown at **C3e** is the Italo-German African Campaign Medal, which was widely issued after its introduction in 1942 but prohibited after the Italian surrender in 1943.

#### **D: CAMPAIGN SHIELDS, 1942-45**

**D1:** The second of the shields to be instituted was to reward participation in the defence of the small town of Cholm to the north of Velikie Luki during the first winter of the Russian campaign. The insignia of the award was worn, as shown here, on the upper left sleeve. The rarest of the formally awarded campaign shields, it was also unique amongst them in the large number of Polizei troops who qualified.

**D2:** This Panzergrenadier of 3.SS-PzGren-Div 'Totenkopf' (formerly, the SS-Totenkopf-Division) had taken part in the defensive fighting between Novgorod and Velikie Luki during the winter of 1941/42, and thus qualifies for the Demjansk Shield. Note that in the case of Waffen-SS recipients it was worn above the eagle and swastika sleeve badge.

**D3:** A number of military personnel qualified for more than one campaign shield, and regulations were drawn up to

govern the manner of wear in such circumstances. This infantry Feldwebel has qualified for both the Crimea and Kuban shields, and wears them in the prescribed manner with the earlier above the later award.

**D4:** Shown here are some of the proposed shields which were designed and approved but which never went into production; or which were made unofficially and thus were never re-authorised under the Ordens-Gesetz of 1957.

**D4a:** The Warsaw Shield – instituted and designs drawn up, but never put into production.

**D4b:** The Balkans Shield – designed, but never formally instituted or manufactured.

**D4c:** The Lapland Shield – manufactured after the end of the war and circulated among surrendered German personnel in Lapland as a commemorative piece. Many variants exist, all very crudely made.

**D4d:** The Lorient Shield – unofficially manufactured as a shield in the so-called 'nude warrior' style or as a simple stamped-up ID disc.

#### **E: 'SECOND GENERATION' BATTLE BADGES, 1943-44**

**E1:** This military police Unteroffizier has seen extensive action against Soviet partisans, and on his breast pocket, alongside the War Merit Cross 1st Class with Swords, he wears the Anti-Partisan Badge in Bronze. Although instituted by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, this award was not restricted to SS personnel; any serviceman involved in combating partisans was eligible, and even naval recipients are known.

**E2:** Veteran armoured troops were recognised in 1943 by the introduction of a new range of awards. This Oberfeldwebel

A fascinating character, Johannes Matthias Höhnscheid is shown here being decorated with the Knight's Cross. Although he was an Army war correspondent, this NCO saw combat on several fronts. Here he wears the 'AFRIKA' cuffband above that which identifies him as a war correspondent – 'Kriegsbericht' in silver-grey script on a black band with silver-grey edges. On his left breast is the Close Combat Clasp in Silver; below this are the Iron Cross 1st Class and (left to right) the Ground Combat Badge of the Luftwaffe, the War Merit Cross, and the Wound Badge in Silver. On his right breast pocket is the German Cross in Gold; and just visible on his right sleeve are three Badges for Single-handed Destruction of a Tank. Herr Höhnscheid had a successful career in the media after the war.





and 'Spieß' from a Panzergrenadier unit wears the '25 engagements' grade of the Tank Battle Badge in the bronze version for motorised infantry and other non-tank crew personnel in armoured formations.

**E3:** Hitler regarded the Close Combat Clasp, and in particular the Gold grade, as one of Germany's most prestigious decorations. This hard-bitten infantry Oberfeldwebel wears the Gold clasp and, as his other awards show, has seen plenty of action. His clasp has also brought him the automatic award of the German Cross in Gold.

**E4:** By mid-1943 it was clear that many of the standard battle badges no longer sufficiently recognised the extensive service rendered by many members of the Wehrmacht. This Pioneer Leutnant wears the newly instituted version of the General Assault Badge indicating participation in 50 separate combat engagements. Although larger than the original design it was made from light alloy so that its weight did not pull inconveniently on the tunic.

#### **F: LUFTWAFFE BATTLE BADGES, 1944-45**

**F1:** Although it was almost certainly never issued, original award documents for the Luftwaffe's Sea Battle Badge do exist, and at least some examples were certainly made. Here, an Unteroffizier crew member from a Luftwaffe air-sea rescue launch is shown wearing the badge.

**F2:** At least a few genuine specimens of the Luftwaffe's Tank Battle Badge are known, as are award documents apparently bestowing it, but no photographic evidence of its actual issue is known. Here the badge is worn by a tank crewman from the 'Hermann Göring' Division.

**F3:** In November 1944 a new range of Luftwaffe Ground Combat Badges was introduced, bearing at the bottom of the wreath a 'box' with the number of engagements in which the wearer had fought. Apparently genuine examples of the numbered badges exist – at least for 25 engagements – though so far no photographic evidence of their wear has emerged. The same applies to the other late war Luftwaffe combat awards, so all the figures on this plate are somewhat speculative. Here, the award is worn by a veteran Unteroffizier of one of the Luftwaffe field divisions.

**F4:** It is known that many Luftwaffe personnel qualified for the Close Combat Clasp in various grades. Award documents are known for the special Luftwaffe pattern clasp, and rumours persist of actual awards having been made, but so far there is no verification that the Luftwaffe insignia was actually presented. The Bronze grade is shown here worn by a paratrooper Leutnant.

#### **G: CAMPAIGN CUFFBANDS & MEDALS; SNIPER BADGE**

**G1:** For many years it was believed that although a few examples of the 'METZ 1944' cuffband had been manufactured, it had probably never been issued. In the mid-1980s, however, a photograph showing it being worn (by the commander of the garrison) came to light, and others have subsequently emerged. This illustration, based on a wartime photo, shows the band being worn by an officer candidate at the Metz Kriegsschule.

**G2:** It is known from original examples that the Sniper Badge was certainly manufactured and presumably awarded, though rarely if ever worn, and certainly not in the combat zone. This illustration shows the correct manner of wear for



**Knight's Cross holder Ludwig Neigl, a senior NCO with schwere-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 519; these heavy tank destroyer units were army-level assets equipped with the 88mm Nashorn self-propelled gun, and later with the formidable Jagdpanther. Although he wears black vehicle uniform with Panzertruppe collar patches, Neigl is therefore not a member of a tank unit, and he displays the General Assault Badge rather than the Tank Battle Badge.**

the badge, above any other speciality badge on the lower right sleeve.

**G3:** Although instituted as late as mid-March 1945, the 'KURLAND' cuffband was produced in considerable numbers and a variety of styles, due to production being handled locally in western Latvia. This view shows it being worn in the regulation position by an Oberwachtmeister of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 912, a self-propelled gun unit which served with distinction in the Pocket.

**G4a:** The Eastern Winter 1941/42 Medal or 'Frozen Meat Order'.

**G4b:** The Spanish 'Blue Division Medal'. Manufactured by both German and Spanish firms (the former specimens being of superior quality), this is now a rather scarce and sought-after award. Some Spanish volunteers fought to the bitter end, falling in the final defence of Berlin in May 1945 in the ranks of the so-called 'Unit Ezquerria' of the Waffen-SS.



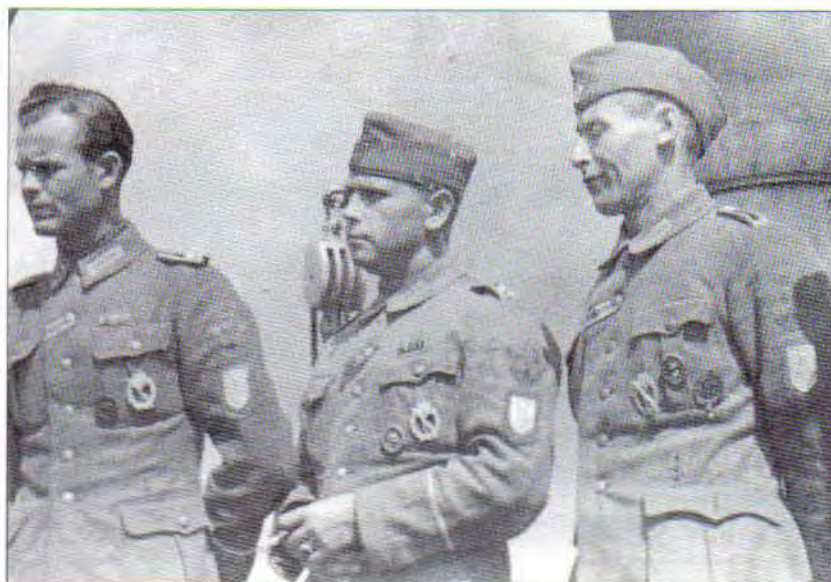
# **H: UNIT LEVEL DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA**

- (a) 290.Infanterie-Division
- (b) Sonderverband Bergmann
- (c) 4.Gebirgs-Division
- (d) 5.Gebirgs-Division
- (e) 1.Panzer-Division
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- (g) 16.Panzer-Division
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- (i) 23.Panzer-Division
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- (o) Kavallerie-Regiment 5
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- (q) 1.Kavallerie-Division
- (r) 4.Kavallerie-Division
- (s) Kavallerie-Regiment 6
- (t) 'St Ulrich' medallion (II/GJR 91)
- (u) Badge worn on left side of field cap by Fallschirmjäger units under command of Gen. Eugen Meindl, consisting of his family crest over the letter 'M' within an oval border.
- (v) 'Blue Comet', painted on left side of helmets worn by IV Btl, Fallschirmjäger-Sturm-Regiment; later used in different colours by other paratroop units, e.g. white edged with light green (HQ Co, FJR 5) and black edged with white (1st Co, FJR 5) in Tunisia, 1943.

RIGHT **SS-Unterscharführer Remy Schrijnen**, a highly decorated Flemish volunteer from the 27.SS-Frw-Gren-Div 'Langemarck', sporting that division's Trifos right collar patch. His Wound Badge in Silver is particularly clear in this posed portrait, below his Iron Cross 1st Class and beside his Infantry Assault Badge.



The Chalm Shield is worn here by three Police NCOs, but below their wreathed eagle Police left sleeve badges – cf Plate D1. Note that all these three have also earned the Iron Cross 2nd Class and the Infantry Assault Badge.





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